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President's Message

Support: It's a Give and Take

am thankful the year 2000 arrived without much fanfare. No runs on banks; no terrorist attacks; no major computer glitches. . . yet! And for the MetGCSA, the year began without a hitch. Barely one week into the new millennium, we hosted our annual Winter Seminar at Westchester Country Club, with a record 225 individuals in attendance. Many thanks to the combined efforts of Will Heintz, Jon Jennings, and Matt Ceplo in staging an excellent day of education. And, of course, a special thank to our Winter Seminar exhibitors (see listing on insert) for supporting our event.

A Two-Way Street

Let me also take this opportunity to thank all the vendors who have been longtime supporters of the association by participating in and supporting our social, educational, and golf events. Many superintendent members probably don't realize just how much our affiliate members contribute to the advancement of our association-and profession. The MetGCSA does not make a profit on dues. In fact, the money raised from dues covers only a portion of the expenses involved in running the association. Similarly, the entrance fees for our monthly golf meetings merely cover the cost of the event. The additional money required in running (continued on page 2)

Special Feature

Sage Advice for Assistant Superintendents

What It Takes to Make It in Our Highly Competitive Field

n today's highly competitive turfgrass management market, there's little room for error. Job-seekers must plot and plan their future path well-deciding how to most wisely prepare themselves for a successful career as a golf course superintendent.

To help prospective assistants chart a thoughtful and productive course, we talked to four veteran superintendents who have prepared their fair share of assistants for superintendent positions: Larry Pakkala, CGCS, of Woodway Country Club in Darien, CT; Greg Wojick, CGCS, of Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT; Joe Alonzi, CGCS, of Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY; and Fred Scheyhing, CGCS, of Mount Kisco Country Club in Mount Kisco, NY.

In this Q & A, you'll find their candid thoughts on what it takes to make it in the golf course management industry today.

What do you feel assistants should do to prepare themselves to compete in today's highly competitive job market?

Larry: First and foremost, work at a good club—even if it means marketing yourself nationally. Let's face it. Just as corporate execs look at what schools prospective new hires have attended, the search committees at clubs are equally impressed by where you've "trained." But no matter where you

land your first job, be sure to make the most of it: Learn not only about day-today operations, but also about budgets and personnel management.

Greg: There are several things I think are important for assistants entering the golf course business today. First, extend yourself beyond course setup and spraying; show an interest in every aspect of a golf course maintenance operation.

Next, be sure to take advantage of all the educational (continued on page 6)

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- (1) Upcoming Events: Met Meeting Calendar Has Holes to Fill

It's a Give and Take Support

MAR 0 6 2000 our association comes from our affiliate members-through their direct donations, Michiparticipation in our Winter Seminar exhibitor Booths and our annual raffle, and their sponsorship in some of our social events.

The fact is, we need and *rely* on affiliate member support. Therefore, I encourage all MetGCSA superintendents to support our affiliate members by purchasing their goods and services.

Another Item of Business

Jon Jennings, as many of you have probably heard through the Met grapevine, has accepted the golf course superintendent's position at Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, IL. We are extremely sad to see Jon leave the board. He has been a great asset to our association and has done a wonderful job as co-editor of Tee to Green and as co-chair- I'd like to thank for his friendship over man of our Education Committee. We wish him well in his new position and best of luck in his career.

In keeping with our By-laws, I've asked Sean Cain of Sunningdale Country Club to take Jon's place on the board, and he has accepted the appointment. Please join me in welcoming Sean to the board of directors.

Along with this new appointment to the board, I've changed some committee assignments. Sean Cain will now cochair the Tournament Committee with Jeff Wentworth. Pat Sisk will take over as co-editor of the Tee to Green. And Matt Ceplo will chair the Education

Committee. Your board of directors will continue to work hard and should not miss a beat through this transition.

Overlooked but Not Forgotten

In my first President's Message, I thanked the many people who have been helpful to me in my career and my service on the MetGCSA board. It was politely brought to my attention that I forgot to mention the Long Island GCSA-a group that I'm not only a member of but that has been equally important to my success. The superintendent and affiliate members in this chapter are sincerely dedicated to advancing our profession, and they offer fellow members the kind of support and camaraderie that our profession has become known for.

There's one individual, in particular, the past 14 years: Rick McGinnes of the Woodmere Club. We actually served one year together on the Met board way back in 1986. He's taken a lot of grief on my behalf over the years but still manages to call me a friend. Thanks, Rick, and thanks LIGCSA.

I hope you are all enjoying a muchdeserved break this winter. By the time I write my next message, we will have returned from our national convention. I look forward to seeing you all at our spring Business Meeting on March 15 at The Patterson Club.

JOHN CARLONE, CGCS President

We Are the Champions!

Hooray for the Tee to Green, which tied for first place with Iowa GCSA's publication, The Reporter, in the GCSAA 1999 Chapter Editors Contest. Competing in Category #4-publications produced primarily by professional editors/publishers or paid chapter executives-Tee to Green put its May/June 1999 issue

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before the judges, which featured Herb Waterous's Skin Cancer article. Winners were selected for their originality, excellence in editorial content and design, and overall ability to communicate useful information to readers. Special thanks and congratulations to the Tee to Green staff, whose hard work and focused efforts this past year earned our publication its award-winning status.

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Spotlight

Season's First Meeting Hosted by First-Time Superintendent Arik Carlson

hen Arik Carlson accepted the superintendent's position at The Patterson Club, he inherited the Met's first-of-the-year Business Meeting, right along with it. Scheduled for March 15, the meeting will mark Arik's second month on the job as superintendent.

Having spent five years as assistant superintendent under Jon Jennings, Arik is well versed in the responsibilities and demands of the job. "Jon was very supportive of my career and involved me in all phases of the operation," says Arik. "I'd like to think that with my knowledge of our programs and practices, the change in guard will be barely perceptible to the membership; the transition will be as smooth as our greens."

Grand Plans

Arik has a degree in Turfgrass Management from the University of Rhode Island, his native state. While earning his degree, he interned at Nassau Country Club in Glen Cove, NY, and at Country Club of Darien in Darien, CT. His first job out of school was as Patterson Club's second assistant, where he says, he became truly hooked on the field. "I found working outdoors and working as part of team to achieve goals personally satisfying."

Arik's goals for the short term involve, first and foremost, settling into his new position, then hiring a few new staff members, ridding the course of some shade areas, and continuing Jon's regime of topdressing greens and tees to enhance both the playing surface and the drainage.

From there, Arik intends to carry out plans to develop wells to ensure a water supply, initiate a comprehensive course mapping scheme called Global Positioning System (GPS), and intensify crew safety training.

Volunteers Needed!

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Patterson Club Superintendent Arik Carlson

Over the long term, Arik will be working with Golf Course Architect Roger Rulewich to develop a master plan for further enhancing the 54-yearold Robert Trent Jones course.

This past season, Roger had worked with Jon to renovate the course's bunkers and area surrounding the green on Hole #4.

Busy at Work and at Home

Arik's favorite pastimes are fishing and ice hockey, though he admits he's had little time for either of them lately. He and his wife, Barbara, of four years have been busily tending to their 10-monthold son, Emerson, who Arik chides is as big as an appliance.

When asked how he landed the Patterson job, Arik says experience in interviewing made all the difference. "Having interviewed for several positions over the past two years, I felt more confident in my ability to convey to the Search Committee how I might be an asset to the club-especially in view of the fact that I'd been helping to manage the operation for the past five years. And what better teacher could I have had than Jon, the superintendent they've all held in high regard?"

BILL PERLEE The Apawamis Club

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University of Massachusetts researchers Nikki Rothwell and Dr. Pat Vittum are looking to develop a degree-day model to aid superintendents in more efficiently and cost-effectively controlling Annual Bluegrass Weevil (ABW), which plagues golf course turf in the Northeast. But they need your help. If you're interested in lending a hand and would be willing to monitor temperatures and moisture levels along with insect activity on your course, contact these researchers at 413-545-0268 for the details.



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Sage Advice for Assistant Superintendents

opportunities you can. Attending workshops and seminars gives you more than just an education, it gives you greater confidence in your knowledge and ability to assume the role of superintendent.

Immerse yourself in the game of golf. To be successful—even respected—in your career, it's important that you not only develop your skill as a golfer, but also understand the rules of golf. Play other golf courses. Look at their operations, their conditions, and grooming practices. Knowing other facilities will help you talk intelligently with members about your own course—and other area courses they might have played.

Last but not least, network—not just with other assistants and superintendents, but with contractors and sales reps as well. These people obviously get around and are well connected with upcoming job opportunities in the area.

Joe: To succeed today, assistants need to assume the stature of a superintendent. They should look the part, shaving regularly and dressing appropriately, and they should maintain a professional attitude both on and off the course. You never know when you'll run into a member—or prospective boss.

Also important, I feel, is that assistants develop computer skills and, probably more important, the ability to meet problems head-on and be flexible—and politically correct—in their approach to solving them. By politically correct I mean always trying to take into account members' thoughts and concerns when coming up with a solution.

In the end, the best way assistants can prepare themselves to compete in today's job market is through good, old-fashioned hard work.

Fred: Important to assistants' success is, of course, that they work hard and learn as much as they can from the superintendent. But also key is that they learn how to build good public relations. They should become knowledgeable enough about the course and the entire operation to talk turf to members—and others in the community. Networking with others in the business is another good way to learn about the turf

business—and, ultimately, about job opportunities.

Q. What role do you feel formal education plays in an assistant's success as a superintendent?

A Larry: Education is paramount, absolutely the best start you can give yourself in this industry. A fouryear degree is a must these days. Also important is continuing education to keep informed of industry trends and innovations.

Greg: These days, a bachelor's degree isn't just nice to have, it's a necessity even if it's not in turfgrass management. With a four-year degree from a good university, you can springboard into just about any area you'd like. Also, you'll put yourself on the same plane as most of the club members you work for; most have at least four-year degrees.

Joe: You can never get enough education. For young people going into the business, there's no excuse for not getting a bachelor's. And if possible, it's not a bad idea to get a master's. It may be what sets you apart from the pack.

Fred: Education is extremely important. This has become a very competitive field, so the more education you get, the better your future in the business.

Q. What specific skills or qualities do you look for in an assistant?

A. Larry: I look for someone who can communicate intelligently and who has a great deal of maturity at a young age. At the same time, I look for people who are "on the green side"—in other words, people who aren't already trained to do things a certain way. When I do the training, it's easier for people to learn the ropes and become a productive part of our operation.

Greg: When hiring assistants, I usually run through a checklist of questions, like calibration, golf rules, etc., to see that they have the basic knowledge to do the job. I like to get a sense of whether they can perform under pressure and, probably most important, whether they have the interpersonal skills and maturity needed to run a crew and communicate appropriately with members.

Joe: I prefer to hire assistants who have experience working on golf courses. Being at a club that hosts major tournaments, I need people who have a good understanding of what needs to be done —and how to get it accomplished. The other thing I look at is their schooling. In my mind, the more the better. When I have two job candidates who are very comparable, I'll always go with the person who has more schooling.

Fred: Number one on my list is to have an assistant who gets along with others and who can handle the crew and give proper details without demotivating anyone. Everyone is different, and they need to be managed differently.

Also critical is that assistants understand the technical side of the business everything from the equipment handling to pesticide management.

Q. Describe the best assistant you ever had. What made that person so valuable to you or your operation?

A Larry: The best assistants are those who are basically self-starters. They know how to make decisions on their own, and they're so motivated and on-the-ball that you feel confident in having them run the operation.

Greg: The best assistants are those who can make decisions as I would. They're the ones who can take the ball and run with it and keep the course playing consistently from one day to the next to the point where members couldn't distinguish who is managing behind-the-scenes.

Joe: The best assistants are the ones who are the first to arrive and the last to leave. They're well aware of the department's goals and of what needs to get done and when. When I find them one step ahead of me, I know they're ready for their own superintendent's job.

Fred: I value people with values, people who are hardworking, honest, and

committed to the job. The best assistants show them the budget process and are extremely reliable; they're flexible, willing to work longer hours to get the job done. And no matter what the job, they'll get it done properly, without a lot of hand-holding.

What do you do to train your assistants—prepare them to move ahead to a superintendent's job?

Larry: The best way to see that your A assistants grow is to allow them the freedom to manage the daily operations. I like to let them think for themselves, make a few mistakes-hopefully small ones-and then learn from them. I also try to be available to my assistants-even beyond work hours. I feel it's important to spend time with them, talking about not only our specific golf course, but any industry-related topic.

Greg: One of the first things I do is define my assistants' responsibilities and pinpoint areas where they might need added training. I want to see them succeed, so I'll work to help them fill any skill gaps. Also important, I feel, is letting assistants-the entire staff, reallyin on as much of the inner workings of the operation as possible. We have brainstorming sessions about how to best handle various problems or routine tasks. I take my assistants to Green Committee meetings to let them hear what members have to say about our work on the course. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's not. Sometimes my assistants will hear me get criticized for something they, themselves, have done on the course. It gives them a clear picture not only of what's expected of our department, but also of how to communicate with a membership and field questions or criticisms.

In the end, I try to teach my assistants is to be open-minded and flexible when dealing with member initiatives or issues related to the golf course.

Joe: I want my assistants to get something out of their stay at Westchester, so I work hard to put them in a position where they can easily observe the goings on of club operations. In the off-season, for instance, I make myself available to

discuss any other facet of the business that they show an interest in.

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During the season, I like to give them the opportunity to make decisions and run the crew. And most important, I insist that they attend all Green Committee meetings. This way, I feel they'll be better prepared to handle a variety of situations on their own course one day. They'll have a good feel for what works, what doesn't, and why.

Fred: I work with my assistant-and other key workers-every day to discuss their job assignments, how they handled them, and what, if anything, they might have done better. Discussion is a key part of the learning process. Also helpful is letting them in on the budget process. Working with-and within-a budget is something better learned before you're on your own. It's also important, I feel, to send assistants to local seminars-and, on occasion, the National.

What do you feel assistants should look for in their first assistant's job? What should they look for in their first superintendent's position?

Larry: Assistants have to understand that they have a lot to learn. You can't substitute textbook knowledge for practical experience. With that in mind, assistants should always look to work with a superintendent who has a reputation for training assistants and then supporting them in their search for their own job one day.

When looking for a first superintendent's job, it doesn't pay to be too picky. My feeling is that you should get a course that needs work, one where you can demonstrate your abilities and build a solid reputation.

Greg: Students looking for their first assistant's job should certainly be looking for a great club and a superintendent who is known to be a good mentor. Once on the job, assistants should take care to develop a good toolbox of knowledge and experience to make sure they're ready for the next step.

When looking for a superintendent's

position, they need to find a job that is not only challenging, but one that fits with the skills they have in their toolbox. In other words, they've got to think about their abilities realistically. The last thing you want to do is take a job you're not equipped to handle. Better to stay on a year or two longer as an assistant and increase your likelihood of success.

Joe: With so many colleges requiring internships, students should use that experience to begin preparing for an assistant's job. Once out of school, they should look for a job with a superintendent and a club that are known for developing assistants into highly qualified superintendents. Don't be afraid during an interview to ask the superintendent what you can expect to learn on the job and how the superintendent helps prepare assistants for the next level. Think twice about accepting the position if you don't like the answers you get.

Before looking for their first superintendent's job, assistants need to set their own personal goals. The last thing anyone should do is settle for a job that falls short of their goals-just to get the title of superintendent. You have to think about where that job will bring you next. Is it a good stepping stone to a bigger and better position somedayor a dead end job that may actually harm your chances of moving up the ladder?

Fred: When looking for their first assistant's job, students should look for a course undergoing major renovations or that holds major tournaments. These always provide good learning experiences. Working at a big-name club will also help them get noticed when trying to make that next jump.

In a superintendent's job, they should look for a club that's going up the ladder, not down. In other words, look for a club that is planning course improvements and has the budget to support the work. They should also consider whether the club they've set their sights on is the kind where they'll fit in and feel a part of the team working to enhance the facility.

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Environmental Stewards Recognized With GCSAA Award

et's hear a round of applause for three MetGCSA members who have earned Environmental Steward Awards for the year 2000. Lakeover National Superintendent Dennis Petruzzelli, CGCS; Quaker Ridge Superintendent Steve Renzetti, CGCS; and Segregansett Superintendent Stephen Tibbels, CGCS, were among 52 golf course superintendents named national, chapter, or merit winners for the year 2000 award, which is designed to recognize superintendents' environmental stewardship efforts on the golf course.

Stephen was one of 24 *chapter* winners selected, while Dennis and Steve were among the 23 *merit* winners selected from GCSAA's 101 affiliated chapters.

In recognition of the winners, program sponsors Novartis Turf & Ornamental Products, Rain Bird, Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products with Cushman, Jacobsen, Ransomes and Ryan brands, and Pursell Technologies Inc., will donate nearly \$23,000 to The GCSAA Foundation, which is devoted to promoting education and environmental and scientific research for golf course management.

Members on the Move

Jon Jennings is the new superintendent at Chicago Golf Club, Wheaton, IL. Previous position: Superintendent, The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT. (Be sure to read Jon's farewell below.)



Arik Carlson is the new superintendent at The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT. Previous position: Assistant superintendent, The Patterson Club. Chip Lafferty is the new superintendent at Wykagyl CC, New Rochelle, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent, Wykagyl CC.

Adios Amigos

It is with mixed feelings that I write about my resignation to the MetGCSA board of directors. I've accepted the position of golf course superintendent at Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, IL, and will be leaving the area later this month.

I want to take this time to thank the membership for their show of confidence in electing me to the board of directors in 1997 and again this past November. It's been a privilege serving our association and our profession while working alongside some of the most dedicated individuals I've ever known.

Ineke Pierpoint and Pandora Wojick are two who should be commended for their commitment to bettering the association. These women work tirelessly, and speaking from my own experience, add great depth and strength to our association's efforts.

I will miss my work with the Education Committee and, of course, my role as co-editor of the *Tee to Green*. The *Tee to Green* is on an exciting new course and will continue to flourish under the direction of Steve Renzetti and new co-editor Pat Sisk. With their strong guidance, I am confident the *Tee to Green* will continue to provide insightful information to our membership and remain a benchmark for other associations to follow.

The MetGCSA has given me the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally to a level that I only once dreamed about. And though this move is undeniably a good one, I will miss the metropolitan area greatly and all the people I have had the good fortune to meet.

Best regards to all,

JON JENNINGS, CGCS Tee to Green Co-Editor

Scholarship Raffle Wins

he 1999 Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the December 19 Ridgeway Country Club Christmas party, raised a record \$9,000 for the MetGCSA's Scholarship Fund and, in addition, awarded \$4,500 in cash prizes to 18 lucky ticket holders.

Many thanks to all who contributed, and congratulations to our \$1,000grand-prize winner, **Gertrude Diller**. Woodway Country Club's Larry Pakkala sold the winning ticket at a Lyons Club dinner. Gertrude, according to Larry, is legally blind and could well use the money. The other prize winners were:

✓ John Streeter, Woodbridge Country Club, \$500

✓ Mike Cook, Alpine, the Care of Trees, \$500

✓ Table #9: John & Jackie Ferrucio, Steven Willand, Inc.; Jeff & Donna Weld, Bayer Corp.; Scott & Kathy Stark, Class A; Tim & Beth Moore, Knollwood Country Club, \$500

✓ Peter Bly, Brooklawn Country Club, \$250

✓ Lance Authlet, D.P. Golf Associates, Inc., \$250

✓ Dennis Flynn, Brae Burn Country Club, \$250

✓ Table #8: Tony & Lucille Grasso, Metropolis CC; John & Margaret O'Keefe, Preakness Hills CC; Tony & Pennie Grasso Sr., Class AFL, \$250

 ✓ Dave Frechette, DAF Services, \$100
 ✓ R. Capeci, Westchester Country Club, \$100

✓ Rich Koualycsik, Preakness Hills Country Club, \$100

✓ Arik Carlson, The Patterson Club, \$100

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2000 Meeting Calendar Has Holes to Fill!



ere's a sneak peak at our year 2000 meeting calendar. Though some sites and dates have been confirmed, we still have a lot of holes to fill. Please consider offering your club for one of the open meeting sites. Call either of the Tournament Committee co-chairs—Jeff Wentworth, 914-738-2752, or Sean Cain, 914-723-3238—to lock in a meeting!

MetGCSA Business Meeting

March 15 The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT Host: Arik Carlson

Two-Ball Qualifier

April 25 Centennial Golf Club, Carmel, NY Host: Will Heintz

Superintendent/Manager Tournament

May 18 Silver Spring Country Club, Ridgefield, CT Host: Peter Rappoccio, CGCS

Invitational Tournament

June SITE OPEN

MetGCSA Championship/ Met Area Team Championship Qualifier, Round 1 July SITE OPEN

Educational Events and Seminars

NYSTA Southeast Regional Conference

Monday, February 28 The Holiday Inn, Suffern, NY

Cosponsored by the Cornell Cooperative Extension, this conference will feature an extensive trade show and roster of lectures on nearly every aspect of turf management. For further information, contact NYSTA at 800-873-8873.

Rutgers University Advanced Turfgrass Management Symposium

Tuesday – Wednesday, February 29 – March 1 Co-sponsored by the GCSA of New Jersey and Rutgers University Center for Turfgrass Science, this symposium will gather the country's top disease experts to discuss Gray Leaf Spot, the disease that is suddenly ravaging ryegrasses. Learn what causes it, how it grows, and strategies for controlling it.

For further information, call 732-932-9271.

Poa Annual Tournament

August ?? Brooklawn Country Club, Fairfield, CT Host: Peter Bly

MetGCSA Championship/Met Area Team Championship Qualifier, Round 2 September SITE OPEN

Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament October SITE OPEN

Annual Class C Outing October 5 Scarsdale Golf Club, Hartsdale, NY Host: Eric O'Neill, assistant superintendent

Met Area Team Championship October 16 Country Club of Fairfield, Fairfield, CT Host: Pat Sisk

MetGCSA Annual Meeting November SITE OPEN

New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show

Monday – Thursday, March 6 – 9 Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI Hundreds of product and equipment booths and a host of informative presentations await you.

For further information, call 401-848-0004.

Metro Milorganite Seminars: How to Evaluate Soil Test Results The Importance of Calcium and Organic Acids Westchester/Fairfield County Session

Tuesday, March 14 at the Ethan Allen Hotel, Danbury, CT Nassau/Suffolk County Session Wednesday, March 15 in East Islip, NY

Earn DEC/DEP credits while learning about the latest in turf and plant health products. For further information, call Gary Rehm at

203-748-GOLF (4653).



Be sure to attend the METGCSA BUSINESS MEETING . . . Wed., March 15 at The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT!

Rutgers Continuing Education Sessions

Rutgers, Cook College

New Brunswick, NJ Rutgers continuing education program is offering the following series of educational sessions for turfgrass professionals.

Applied Topics: Better Landscape Through

Better Soils Monday – Tuesday, February 28 – 29

Underground Storage Tanks Wetland Identification Tuesday, March 7/Tuesday, May 23

Beyond the Basics of Landscape Construction Tuesday – Wednesday, March 14 – 15

Applied Topics: Successful Insect ID and Control for Ornamental Plants Wednesday, March 15

Hazardous Tree ID Thursday, March 16

For further information, contact Kurt Martens at 732-932-8451.

Get rid of those #% GEESE TODAY! STATIC DISPLAYS DON'T WORK.

Dogs are expensive. Instead use safe, harmless noisemakers to INVADE the pest's territory with irregular movement and intimidating sounds.



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(12) Tee to Green January/February 2000

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