New publisher opens new era at GCN

My name is Jon Whitney, and I'm your new publisher here at Golf Course News. I make a point of saying your publisher because I believe that a publication belongs to its readers. We at GCN cannot call ourselves successful unless we consistently provide you, our readers, with our information and journalism which helps you succeed.

The departure of founding publisher Charles von Brecht opens a new chapter for us. Charlie came on board at the start, in 1988, and did a terrific job for GCN. He's now working for Centcom Limited, the sales arm of the American Chemical Society, as eastern regional manager for 31 publications! We hope to build on the record he established here, and we wish him well in his new endeavors.

My primary responsibility as publisher is to do everything I can to deliver to you meaningful content in an attractive package, while working with our dedicated editorial staff to accomplish that mission every day and in every issue.

BUSINESS BACKGROUND

I'm a Maine native who grew up in the Yankee tradition of hard work and straight talk. I learned early on the meaning of the words "a job worth doing is worth doing well." Whatever success I may have had in my working life can be directly attributed to the culture and values instilled during my upbringing.

MY OPPORTUNITY

For 10 years, I worked in advertising sales and management for several suburban Boston newspapers. A dozen years ago I came back to Maine to start my own publishing business and, most recently, started, published and subsequently sold what is now Maine's most widely read business newspaper.

My affinity for publications dedicated to quality editorial content and design, coupled with particular attention to reader and customer service, is what brought me here to GCN.

MEETING YOUR NEEDS

As we move forward into this next phase of our publishing life, we will continue to provide stories that are helpful, informative and instructive. A few articles in this issue are typical examples.

The front-page story about Bank of America's lawsuit against Golf Trust of America shows the dangers of carrying a heavy debt load to finance aggressive expansion, especially when business conditions turn negative.

The piece by contributing writer Larry Hirsch about the three ways to value a golf course will be of interest to anyone who owns or manages a course. In the maintenance area, we have a piece about how Salem Country Club superintendent Kip Tyler—despite severe winter damage—got the course ready for the Senior U.S. Open.

In the weeks to come I will be spending most of my time listening—listening to writers, production people, sales reps, advertisers and, most importantly, readers, to determine what we can do better to meet the needs of our audience.

NO RADICAL CHANGES

Don't expect any radical changes. Do expect to see every effort made on our part to make GCN your primary journal for news and information as you go about the business of developing, managing, maintaining, and supplying goods and services to the thousands of golf courses across the United States and Canada.

I am very proud and happy to be your new publisher and look forward to meeting and talking with many of you. Please feel free to call me anytime at 207-846-0660, or e-mail me at jwhitney@golfcoursenews.com.

Architects 'fighting city hall' for affordable golf

Affordable golf! That will be the rallying cry for Damian Pascuzzo during his term this year as president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. And not just affordable golf, but also "alternative golf." The idea is to "feed the bottom end" of the golfing public, he says, and Pascuzzo has a plan to make it happen.

In league with fellow designer Michael Hurdzan, the architects hope to create a document, maybe even a book, to outline the community approach to building golf courses.

The top green fee is $5, and the course sees 50,000 rounds a year.

Pascuzzo's motivation, of course, is to grow the next generation of golfers. "Kids are just happy to get out and play golf," he says. "Once they learn the necessary skills and can get the ball airborne, they'll move up to the next level—the regulation munis, the daily-fees. And as they get older and start making money, they'll begin the resort courses and the upscale daily-fees."

"It's merely entry level," he adds. "It's the bottom of the pyramid, like McDonald's. You're not supposed to have a career at McDonald's. It's your first employment experience and you move up from there."

Pascuzzo recently went back to one of those small L.A. courses where he learned the game as a kid. The top green fee is $5, and the course sees 50,000 rounds a year.

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