“I liked being out there. I liked working the grass,” says Edwin, who gained esteem for his over-fertilized lush greens. Edwin reflects on his unique upbringing with an unemotional bluntness. He nonchalantly recalls starting in the business as a 6-year-old soda jerk in the Lions pro shop; being forced to box with his fellow caddies on rainy days; and raking the ponds for errant golf balls every morning before school — so Roy could sell them in the clubhouse.

“He sold them for 10 cents each,” Jamie says. “It’s where grandpa made most of his money. And if he saw you taking one of those balls from the pond, he’d chase you.”

Edwin grew up in a drastically different world than the one his only son grew up in. It was a segregated world. But one day in 1951, something happened at Lions that changed golf there forever. Two black youths stepped onto the course and played a round of golf. Someone reported it to the clubhouse. The clubhouse said, “Let ‘em play.”

It was a heavy, historical moment. Edwin caddied with one of the young men. He tells the story slowly, weightily, as if he’s watching it unfold. The magnitude of the event is reflected in Edwin’s voice. It drops to a whisper as he says, “The end of segregation...on the golf course.”

TEXAS TEA

In the shed behind the Hidden Falls maintenance building there’s a loud whirring noise. It sounds like someone’s running a vacuum.

There’s no vacuum here, though. That’s the sound of compost tea brewing. In a medium-sized cistern, the organic combination of compost, molasses, worm castings and other ingredients swirls, bubbles and foams. It’ll brew like that for 72 hours before it’s finished.

Jamie pours some of the brown liquid into a measuring cup and raises it to his nose. “When this is ready, this is going to smell like earth,” he shouts over the whirring. “This is not quite fully ready yet.”

Edwin’s standing behind Jamie, looking thoroughly perplexed. He’s seen his son’s concoction before. “It just confuses me,” he says.

Though these two men share a name, a passion and a profession, their styles of greenkeeping are drastically different. Edwin says he was good at driving around and pointing; Jamie works hands-on alongside his crew at a course where a $330,000 budget requires it.

“This is a real low-budget place,” says Jamie. “Dad would say, ‘Fertilize this, do all this.’ Well, our budget won’t support the things he would want to do. What’s spurring my interest is this compost tea. I have the least amount of money, the least amount of resources, but I’m now growing the healthiest turf I’ve ever grown.”

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Jamie pulls out the Droid again, and brings up his Facebook page. He enlarges a photo of himself proudly displaying his root system. It’s six inches long and intact as he lets it dangle from his fingertips.

“It’s unbelievable,” Edwin marvels. “My turf never would have done that.” They may have had different styles, different technologies, but they both know what good turf looks like.

Jamie is such a proponent of compost tea, he and his business partner, Dale Wieweck, who turned him on to it, are set to launch their own mobile compost tea business. They’ll peddle and apply their product everywhere from estates to golf courses. They recently acquired their first golf customer — Lions Municipal Golf Course. Yes, Grandpa’s old course. Roy Kizer would surely approve.

Wieweck’s inspiration for turning to compost tea was based on his years in the landscape maintenance business, where he felt pressure to get green-up quickly. “Our chemical budgets were going up every year,” he says, “and I decided ‘I don’t like this.’”

His discomfort stemmed from the death of his father, a longtime dairy farmer who ultimately died of inoperable cancer.

“My dad passed away from chemicals,” Wieweck says. “Back then, in the 1940s and ’50s, it was nothing to go out and spray chemicals and get it on your boots and wear those same boots for three years.”

Now Jamie’s as sold on compost tea as Wieweck is, bragging, “I got roots this deep in the greens out here. I can walk away from them and they won’t fall off.”

‘CUED UP

The lunch crowd at Peete Mesquite Barbecue is tapering off. Jamie and Edwin are sitting at a picnic table enjoying beef brisket, reminiscing about the parties they threw in Lakeway.

“Dad would always say, ‘Remember, it’s only wrong if you get caught,’” Jamie recalls. “And if you get caught, don’t call me.”

Edwin retired in 1996 at age 65 and hasn’t looked back. “It took me one day to get used to it,” he says.

Jamie smiles. “One time I called Dad up about a year later and I said, ‘Hey Dad, how you likin’ that retirement?’ And he goes, ‘Man, it’s wonderful. I got seven Saturdays in every week.’”

Today, the Kizers have come full circle. Edwin went riding around with him; now he observes his son.

“I go riding around with him, he talks about what he’s doing, dreaming and all that, I don’t have to do nothing but listen,” he says.

Edwin knows some of Jamie’s plans won’t work. Still, he keeps his thoughts to himself.

At least, not yet. We don’t want to jinx it. So let’s just take a look at the year in the golf course management industry, along with some of our own keen insights along the way… ➤➤

BY KEN MOUM WITH ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY BY SETH JONES
A group representing the We Are Golf initiative traveled to Washington, D.C. to help spearhead the White House’s announcement of Summer Jobs+, a call to action for businesses, non-profits, and government to work together to provide pathways to employment for America’s youth in the summer of 2012.

It is estimated that golf course maintenance jobs open to youths increased from 104,300 in 2011 to 107,280 in 2012.

Sad, even with more youths in the workforce, there was no increase in youths being on time for morning meetings.

GCSAA named the winners of its 2011 Watson Fellowships: Lindsey Hoffman, Renee Rioux and Joseph Roberts. Each was awarded a $5,000 postgraduate grant and a trip to the 2012 Golf Industry Show and GCSAA Education Conference in Las Vegas.

The GCSAA decided not to go with our advice, and just award the grants in cash, so the students could double it up at the tables in Vegas. Win some, lose some.

On Jan. 27, Barbara Douglas passed away in Glendale Arizona at age 69 after a three-year battle with cancer. She was the first minority chairman of the USGA Women’s Commit-
Iowa State University took its 12th title in 14 years at the Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition. The University of Massachusetts-Amherst took second and the University of Maryland took third-place over 87 teams. Not only does Iowa State dominate the turf bowl, they also dominate my Kansas Jayhawks on the turf — 51-23 this year. So I’ve got nothing smart to say about the Cyclones other than, “well done.”

Superintendent Gordon Witteveen was posthumously inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame. The founding director of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association and longtime superintendent worked for more than 50 years at courses throughout Ontario and Quebec. He was also a respected author and speaker.

The two largest golf ownership and management companies on Myrtle Beach’s Grand Strand joined to become National Golf Management. The new company, formed from Myrtle Beach National Co. and Burroughs & Chapin Golf Management, is one of the 15 largest course management companies in the nation, with 23 combined courses.

If two management companies coming together doesn’t give you warm fuzzies, we don’t know what will…

Joe Steranka announced that he will retire at the end of the year after seven years as CEO of the PGA of America. “I love golf, I love the PGA and I think the game is in a good spot right now,” Steranka said. “It’s the biggest decision of my life.”

On April 18 the U.S. EPA denied a request to revoke all tolerances and the request to cancel all registrations for the pesticide 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, or 2,4-D. The petition was originally filed on November 6, 2008, by Natural Resources Defense Council.

Syngenta marketing communications manager Margaret Bell retired after 35 years with the company. She had been active in many Green Industry associations, especially the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, of which she served as vice president for nearly 12 years.

The TOCA meetings will be a lot less fun without Bell’s energy. But anytime a friend can retire on their own terms, we’re all for it.

Webb Simpson won the United States Open at the Olympic Club in San Francisco. Superintendent Pat Finlen is front and center in the media, including an appearance on the Golf Channel’s Morning Drive.

That’s almost as cool as USGA Executive Director Mike Davis grabbing the squawking bird-guy and almost ripping his arm off on live TV.

Golf Supply House purchased Eagle One Golf Products of Anaheim, Calif., which has manufacturing capability in several product segments, including recycled plastic golf course furnishings, golf course signage and golf flags. It also distributes a broad line of other golf course equipment and supplies.

They also have this sign available, which we think should be mandatory at some of the courses we play.

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Mike Hurdzan, Ph.D., had gained critical acclaim for his golf course design centered on environmental stewardship and affordability, even before he was named the winner of GCSAA’s 2013 Old Tom Morris Award.

Hurdzan and his longtime design partner Dana Fry announced that they are to go their separate ways. Fry is partnering with Jason Straka to form Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design and focus on projects in Asia and Brazil. Hurdzan and his son Chris will concentrate on golf course projects in North America as Hurdzan & Son.

“We’re still hopeful for a reunion tour in ten years.”

Frank Rossi, associate professor and extension turfgrass specialist in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., is named the TOCA Environmental Communicator of the Year. The program is sponsored by Project EverGreen.

Bert McCurry is the 2012 recipient of Clemson University’s highest agricultural honor: the Godley-Snell Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research.

The National Climatic Data Center reported that the mainland United States has experienced the warmest 12 months since record keeping began in 1895, affecting golf courses and agriculture across the nation. The warmest-ever-recorded March and extreme heat in June helped make the first six months of 2012 the warmest recorded of any January-June stretch. In the last half of June, 170 all-time temperature records were matched or smashed in cities across the lower 48 states.

Toro launched the Toro Leaderboard, a new website that allows superintendents who own Toro equipment or irrigation solutions to share reviews on products.

For the first time in its 80-year history, Augusta National Golf Club has female members. The home of golf’s Masters championship had faced criticism because of its all-male membership. Augusta National invited former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and South Carolina financier Darla Moore to become the first women in green jackets when the club opens for a new season in October.

We think this is great news. And we hope that someday Augusta National will allow us the honor of a press credential so we can help sing the club’s praises from Amen Corner.

Audubon International’s board of directors named Ryan Aylesworth the new executive director for the environmental education organization.
Gregg Breningmeyer passed away on Aug. 9 at the age of 56. He was director of sales and marketing for John Deere Worldwide Golf and Turf Company and a friend to many in the industry.

Gregg was well known by the Golfdom staff as a kind, funny, straightforward guy, and we sure miss him. We’ll toast one to him at the GIS in two months, as will many others, no doubt.

Tropical Storm Isaac hit the Southeastern U.S. in late August, bringing with it drenching rain that broke the drought in some areas, and caused massive flooding in others.

Syngenta agreed to acquire the DuPont Professional Products insecticide business, a leading supplier of innovative products for the professional turf, ornamentals and home pest control markets, for a consideration of $125 million. The acquisition will expand the range of products that Syngenta offers to golf course and lawn care professionals and to ornamental growers. Syngenta will also access the related active ingredients and formulated products from DuPont through exclusive supply and licensing agreements.

On Aug. 28 Stanley Zontek passed away. His life was devoted to the game of golf and the improvement of golf courses throughout the world. It is simply impossible to calculate the impact Zontek had through his 41 years of visiting courses, writing articles, speaking at conferences and befriending people all over the world.

Sept. 14, the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed S. 3552, the Pesticide Registration Improvement Extension Act of 2012, which reauthorizes the collection of fees to support the EPA’s Office of Pesticide Program registration process.

The Georgia Golf Environmental Foundation will invest more than $23,000 in research projects, further advancing the game’s drive toward sustainability. The foundation announced it would help fund two projects for scientists at the University of Georgia in which water conservation shapes as a key outcome for the state’s golf industry that delivers a direct economic impact of $2.4 billion annually. Established in 2004, the GGEF promotes sustainable environmental stewardship in golf and is the philanthropic arm of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association.

BASF announced plans to acquire Becker Underwood for a price of $1.02 billion. The move makes BASF a leading global provider of technologies for biological seed treatment as well as seed treatment colorants and polymers. BASF also expanded its product portfolio in biological crop protection, turf and horticulture, animal nutrition and landscape colorants and coatings.

If we had a billion bucks to burn, how would we spend it? Frozen burritos. And a grande-sized freezer.

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The IGF, which is composed of golf’s national governing bodies in more than 150 countries, released its statement on sustainability in October. The statement was signed by 153 golf organizations, placing sustainability as a core priority. The focus of the declaration is on the management of golf facilities, administration of golf events and the influence of golfers as consumers.

The Organic Arsenical Products Task Force announced that MSMA applications labeled for use on golf courses (except in Florida) will be extended for at least 3 to 4 years until a new National Academy of Sciences review on inorganic arsenic is completed.

Superstorm Sandy, the second-costliest hurricane of all time, hit the East Coast in late October. The largest Atlantic hurricane of all time (with winds spanning 1,100 miles), Sandy killed 253 people, left about $65 billion in damages and impacted 24 states, primarily New York and New Jersey.

American Society of Golf Course Architects members see increase in renovation and remodel work. In October the association’s website featured a number of articles about ongoing or recently completed renovation work across North America by its members.

The third annual Symposium On Affordable Golf was held at the Southern Pines Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C.

Jacobsen teased customers that “something new is coming” on its website, www.jacobsen.com. The new product, pictured but covered with a sheet, will be unveiled January 15th, 2013. For more information, see page 39 of this issue.

Golfdom announced it is now available as an app for iPad.

Yes, that’s convenient, but there’s still no way to leave an iPad draped over the handicap bar in the men’s room toilet, is there?

Ken Moum is a golf maniac who lives in Topeka, Kan. Seth Jones is just a maniac.
Topdressing with compost can improve fairways.

By Clark Throssell, Ph.D.
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growing and a bad playing surface.

With the Women’s Big Ten Golf Championship set for spring 2008, Pagett wanted to improve the turf on the 7th fairway and rough to provide the playing surfaces that Big Ten golfers deserved.

“Dr. McNitt and Dr. Pete Landschoot, a Penn State turfgrass scientist, were great resources for this project and I met with them to develop a plan to topdress the 7th fairway and surrounding rough with compost,” said Pagett.

McNitt and Landschoot had both practical and academic experience using compost to improve turfgrass stands. The compost selected was produced locally by the University Area Joint Authority using municipal biosolids and hardwood saw-