

Ten years of delivering the news, connecting a community

This isn't just any new year for *Golf Course News*. As we flip the calendar we're marking our 10th full year in operation — 10 years of delivering the news of the golf course industry.

That's a solid chunk of time. And in that time GCN has become more than just an information source, we've become an integral part of the industry itself.

Next month, when the industry hits the GCSAA show floor in Orlando, Fla., we'll be bumping into superintendents, golf course architects and turf product managers who are not only story subjects and news sources but vital links to keeping the information flowing and the golf course community interconnected.

Forgive me for coming off sounding warm and fuzzy, but with that many years in the business, it's hard not to make a few friends along the way. For those of you who have been there along the way, I'd like to say, "Thank you."

Although I haven't been here for the full ride, I would personally like to thank two guys who *have*, Managing Editor Mark Leslie and Associate Editor Peter Blais. Chances are, you know them both. These guys got GCN off the ground and continue to make GCN the golf course industry's first source for business news.



Michael Levans,
editor

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We started our Reaching Out section about a year ago when The First Tee kicked off. In this section we search for developments and established courses that are bending a knee to help kids get into the game. This month we feature 'a year in review' piece from The First Tee's Tod Leiweke (page 11) and a package of Reaching Out stories starting on page 39.

I'd like to draw your attention to the story on page 53 about the folks at Willowbrook Golf Course close to my hometown. Tim Stawovy is one of those guys who hates to sit around and watch the snow fly. Instead, he turns his golf course — a solid 9-holer where I actually played my second round of golf at the age of 10 — into a ski slope. Not only did I hone my golf skills on his greens, but I learned how to ski on his snow. Tim and his crew reach out all year round.

Where's the integrity? It's on the links

When the New York Jets' Vinnie Testaverde fell a foot-and-a-half short of the end zone on the last play of the game against Seattle and the referee called it a touchdown, you didn't see Testaverde jump up and say, "No, ref, I wasn't in."

When the referee miss-called the coin flip before the overtime period between the Detroit Lions and Pittsburgh Steelers, you didn't see a Lions co-captain correct the ref and say, "Oh, ref, they named it tails; they get the call."

And when have you ever seen a Michael Jordan or Larry Bird tell a referee that he was not fouled and should not be going to the foul line?

Yet, in golf, time and time again, we have seen players disqualify themselves because of a rules infraction, or take some other self-inflicted penalty in fairness to others and the regulations of the game.

So, you tell me, which sport has the most integrity? Or, perhaps better said, in which sport do players show the most integrity?

The United States has never had a "Little League" of golf, or an equivalent of it. Instead, we have Pop Warner football, Babe Ruth League baseball, or Youth League basketball.

Perhaps, with such a strong recent emphasis on First Tee-type programs, now is the time to form a Kids League of golf. It could be citywide, countywide, statewide — you name it.

Larry Turner, who founded and now operates Champions for Kids in North Carolina, said golf teaches "the values of integrity and courtesy." (See story, page 39) Hm-m. Wouldn't it be interesting to see those values exhibited in next Monday night's football game?

Allan MacCurrach, president of golf course builder MacCurrach Golf, said architects Pete Dye or Bobby Weed "get us out to do something at TPC at Sawgrass [in Jacksonville, Fla.] every year. I swear, that whole golf course is built on Velcro."

The initial printing of 1,500 copies of "Practical Golf Course Maintenance: The Magic of Greenkeeping," was sold out in the first two months, according to co-author Gordon Witteveen. Witteveen, a founder of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, and former GCSAA President Michael Bavier have been tag-teaming their seminars on greenkeeping in countries around the world. Their book converted the information from their seminar into print. It is now even being used as a text by some colleges, Witteveen said from his Toronto Board of Trade offices, where he oversees a half dozen golf courses. Witteveen will be honored with the Canadian Golf Course Association's (CGSA) annual John B. Steel Award during CGSA's annual meeting in March. Bavier hails from Inverness Golf Club in Palatine, Ill.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The 'bunny slope' course reconsidered

Edit Note: The follow letter to the editor is in response to Michael Hurdzan's commentary in GCN's Design and Construction section in the November issue.

Michael Hurdzan's proposal for "bunny slope" courses must meet the criteria of a sensible business plan. Looking to build these courses on virgin land may not be sensible. There are plenty of lower-quality courses in my area that seem to serve the high-handicapper.

Older, outdated courses may naturally fill his perceived void. To go through the expenses of acquiring land, permitting, engineering, and building these types of facilities seems unreasonable.

Amazingly, Hurdzan decries the number of people promoting themselves as architects who may not be qualified when he has promoted John Cook as a co-designer on some of his projects.

What qualifies John Cook to

be a designer? Hurdzan needs to see that he is sending the wrong message by promoting Tour stars as designers, thus degrading our profession. I see the bigger problem being the design professionals, engineers, landscape architects, even contractors, who promote their golf design services as another means for garnering fees to meet cash flow.

Oftentimes, I have seen these companies hire someone whom may have spent a couple years in construction, or working for an architect. Bottom line, these professional firms are hungry for ways to generate fees, and see the golf boom as another type of development they can scavenge for fees as expert consultant.

I worked under a pro/archi-

tect arrangement, and it was a farce. The active pros, in particular, do not have the necessary time to devote to this profession. They have chosen this profession out of supposed interest in design, when, in fact, they see it as another way to make money on their name.

Basically, they want to see your plans. There are some well-qualified, big-name architects that have never prepared a set of plans, and many who do not work from plans. They qualified themselves by devoting their entire time and energies to the profession. Something the vast majority of golf pros, like John Cook, have never done.

Hurdzan, again missing the point, attacks inexperienced con-

tractors as driving up construction costs. What drives up construction costs are the following: big-name architects who "design in the field" requiring several change orders because they have only a sketchy idea where the design of the hole is headed even though the contractor is on-site constructing it and several other holes; big-name architects who will build courses anywhere under any site conditions, no matter the costs; big-name architects who have a reputation for being egotistical, who make several changes in the field even after having approved a course of action the month before, who visit the site infrequently, leaving important decisions to staff, often overriding their decisions requiring field changes. This is what drives up construction costs.

— Kelly Blake Moran
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