

## The more things change...

*Editor's note: Steve Renzetti started as a superintendent two months before Golf Course News came into existence.*

By STEVEN RENZETTI

• Director of golf operations at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, N.Y.

It is always interesting to reflect back. Sometimes the more things change, the more they seem to stay the same.

Ten years ago, I was a first-

year superintendent preparing for my first full season of having the responsibilities and pressures of prepping a golf course for spring. As I was then, I still am today: reviewing bids from suppliers; wrapping up winter projects; training staff; educat-

ing members; and mapping out control strategies for the season.

I'm still fighting moss on greens; trying to reduce the effects of poa annua seeding in May; timing my Hyperodry control (oops, I mean annual bluegrass weevil); and trying to get rid of my slice.

Much of the core equipment



Steve Renzetti

is the same, perhaps a safety switch here or a tweak there. But all in all, much is the same.

As for revolutionary equipment, two things stand out.

The first is the Hydroject aerifier, which has enabled turf managers to get oxygen down into the soil with minimal dis-

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## Audubon rough, the Web and GCN

By GORDON WITTEVEEN

• Golf course superintendent, The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto Country Club

In the business of golf course maintenance, the last decade of the 20th century belongs to Audubon rough, the Internet and *Golf Course News*. All three have changed the face of golf.

There isn't a new golf course being built without fescue, birdhouses and a Web Site. Similarly, the minute an entrepreneur starts up a new golfing venture he grabs for the latest copy of *Golf Course News*, an ungainly tabloid published in a no-name place on the East Coast. For Pete's sake, don't they know that for any new magazine to be successful it must come from places like New York, Cleveland or perhaps even Kansas City?

That little newspaper with modest beginnings grew and



Gordon Witteveen

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grew with each succeeding issue, and against all odds survived to celebrate its 10th birthday. Perhaps it'll even make it into the 21st century, in spite of its awkward size. Who wants to read a magazine, anyway, that is difficult to handle, that almost always falls out of your hands, and knocks the glasses off your nose?

I remember certain things in life very well: The day Canadian soldiers chased the Germans out of my hometown in Holland at the end of the Second World War, and the day we beat the Russians in hockey right in their own backyard in Moscow. Just as clearly, do I remember the first time I picked up a copy of *Golf Course News*. It was at the Devil's Pulpit from the desk of superintendent Ken Wright. One expects a place like the Pulpit to have the latest and the newest. "Here, take it! I am finished with it," said Ken Wright, and I did

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GOLF COURSE NEWS



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## Renzetti

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ruption to play.

The second is alternative spikes. I recall bringing the literature home from a trade show and offering anyone a free change-over just to try them. Now you can hardly buy a pair of shoes without them.

Irrigation systems are much better. More efficient pump sta-

tions and control systems have dramatically improved water usage and playability.

This overlaps with what is the most significant change in the industry—computerization. Ten years ago, I was explaining to my chairman the need to computerize the department. Today, ironically, my chairman is an executive with Sun Microsoft. My office has two desktop computers, one DTN weather moni-

tor with satellite dish, a laptop computer, facsimile machine, copier, Hewlett Packard scanner, cellular telephone, television/VCR and a Bose radio.

I know a superintendent who, just a few years ago, scoffed at the idea of using a computer. Now he is a regular on the Internet, and is spearheading an association Web page. This new equipment gives us the ability to document and professionally

prepare reports and proposals.

I find a greater need to promote what superintendents have done for decades. The Audubon International program has given credibility to what is second nature to us—conservation and preservation.

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—Steve Renzetti

## All in a Day's Work.

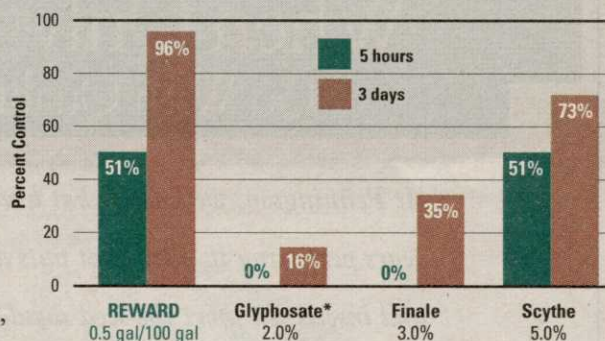


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CIRCLE #130

I interpret the new generation of regulations to be good and bad. Some force us to tighten our belts up a little, while others just don't make sense at all.

I hear a lot of talk about how television golf has put undo pressure on the day-to-day conditioning of golf courses. But what I see is superintendents answering the call, stepping up to the plate and performing.

I play courses all over the country and time after time find myself saying at the end of my round, 'Boy, is this place in great shape.' I think television has put superintendents in the spotlight, both in recognition and compensation.

The golfing public has fully recognized superintendents are the most influential people at their facilities in terms of the total golfing experience. This is where the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's board and staff has come into play. GCSAA has come full circle. It is an organization that works diligently and tirelessly in supporting and promoting endeavors we feel are important. I trust the management and direction our national association is heading.

Just a few years ago, I wrote in my club's newsletter that it is an exciting time to be a member at Wykagyl. It was then, and still is today, a very progressive club, making positive changes that benefit everyone.

It is also an exciting time to be superintendents, as we lead the golf community into the next millennium.

## Maxwell

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product selection.

However, all of this increased competition will be of no value if we don't create new golfers. The change that we need to see that hasn't happened in the past 10 years is a significant growth in the number of golfers. The increased supply of courses, apparel and equipment has far exceeded the demand for these goods and services. In simple terms, we're all fighting for bigger pieces of the same pie. As an industry we need to focus on increasing the pie.

When golf was merely a game we didn't worry about market share, return on investment and such. If we're going to be an industry, we have to act like one.

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