

## New publisher opens new era at GCN

**M**y 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,



Jon Whitney,  
publisher

with news and information 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.

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

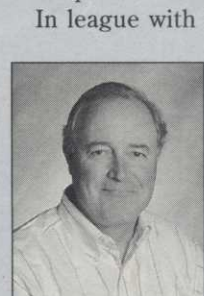
Don't expect any radical changes. Do expect to see every effort made on our part to make GCN your primary journal for news and information as you go about the business of developing, managing, maintaining, and supplying goods and services to the thousands of golf courses across the United States and 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 207-846-0600, or e-mail me at [jwhitney@golfcoursenews.com](mailto:jwhitney@golfcoursenews.com).



## Architects 'fighting city hall' for affordable golf

**A**ffordable 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.



Jay Finegan,  
editor

In league with fellow designer Michael Hurdzan, the architects hope to create a document, maybe even a book, for municipal officials. They'd like to see more city- and county-owned courses – par-3 layouts, "executive" tracks and short nine-holers – where kids, factory workers, seniors and others can play a quick round for \$5 or \$10.

Pascuzzo grew up playing these small "munis" all over Los Angeles. "Some were only 30 acres," he says, "but the fees were \$2 or \$3. You might be hitting off a mat, but you'd be hitting to a push-up green of 2,000 square feet. There wasn't a Stimpmeter in sight, and we had a great time. My friends and I could spend four afternoons a week there during the summer, because it was affordable."

### 20-ACRE LAYOUTS

In the 1960s, '70s and early '80s, he says, municipalities constructed numerous small courses. But then they backed off.

"Somewhere along the line, they realized they didn't have to use their own resources," Pascuzzo says. "They could let somebody else build a course on public land, hire a management company to run it, and take a percentage of the profit. The management firms were happy to oblige, but that \$25 green fee went to \$30 or \$35. The next thing we knew, the cities were totally getting out of it."

The problem today, he says, is ignorance on the part of local officials. They don't know you can build a nice par-3 course on 20 or 30 acres, for well under \$1 million, that kids can play on their allowance.

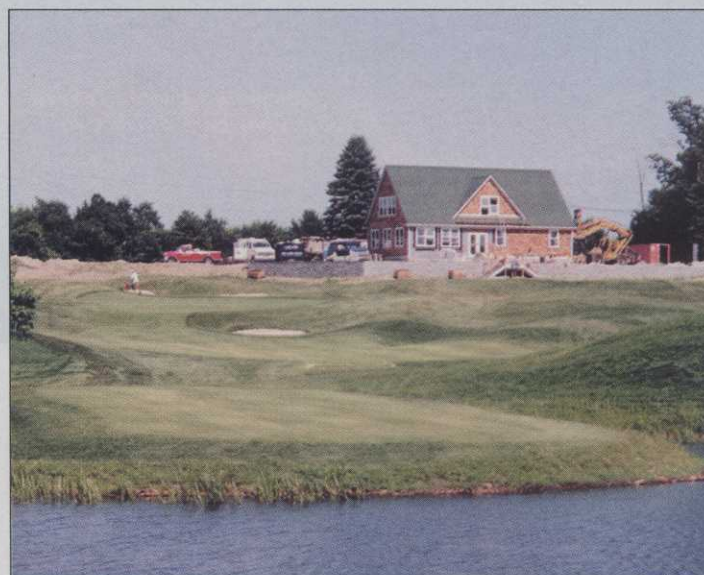
"In the next year, we'll try to get our document, or guide book, into the hands of park and recreation directors and public works officials," Pascuzzo says. "We'll let them know you can build these things inexpensively, on a small piece of land, and provide

a great community asset.

### THE McDONALD'S OF GOLF

Pascuzzo's motivation, of course, is to grow the next generation of golfers. "Kids are just happy to get out to 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 supporting the resort courses and the upscale daily-fees."

"It's merely entry level," he adds. "It's the bottom of the



View of the ninth hole at the new Rose Hill Golf Club, a par-3 course in Kingstown, R.I. The nine holes are laid out on 20 acres.

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.

Continued on next page

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