

## Povec to lead *Golf Course News*

New publisher announces renovation of the year award

Before I introduce myself as the new publisher of *Golf Course News*, I have a special announcement to make.

With course openings on the decline in the United States, renovation work is becoming a major source of business for architects and builders. In fact, several companies who entered the 2002 *Golf Course News* Builder of the Year Awards will be busier this year than last because of increased renovation work.

Another hot-button issue in the industry is golf and the environment. Many organizations and courses are setting ambitious goals for meeting environmental standards, including Audubon International's 50 in Five campaign to sign up half the courses in the United States within five years' time (GCN, Jan. 2002).

Recognizing the emerging importance of these two issues, we here at *Golf Course News* are announcing this month our Renovation of the Year Award (see ad on page 25), the first of which will be given in February 2004. GCN will solicit proposals from recently remodeled golf courses and have them judged by a panel of industry experts. The award will be given to the golf course and its superintendent. Special recognition will also be given to the course architect, builder and participating vendors, with an emphasis on environmental enhancements.

As for your new publisher, my name is Jim Povec and my first job in life was caddying and cutting greens at Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Brecksville, Ohio. Since those early days, I've spent most of my career managing magazines, trade shows or Web sites with companies such as Forbes magazine, IDG, Softbank and Ziff/Davis.

My passion and my vocation finally meet here at *Golf Course News*. I am committed to a healthier golf course industry, giving way to more ideas like the Renovation of the Year Award. I am committed to faster play, which is an editorial focus of this issue. I am also committed to introducing more new players to the game, especially young players.

And finally, I am committed to prove that more investment in our golf courses means more revenues and more growth for the game. Please contact me at 207-846-0600, ext. 272, or e-mail me at [jpovec@golfcoursenews.com](mailto:jpovec@golfcoursenews.com).



Jim Povec, publisher



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## Speed = Excitement

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up under that absurdly low mowing height and the market for Tifdwarf was born. The same thing happened with bentgrass, only with lesser gradients; that is until we took a quantum leap with L-93 and the A and G series in recent years.

What drove this march toward lower mowing heights and better grasses to withstand them? Excitement. It is just pure fun to putt on fast greens. I'm not talking about the 12-plus speeds they talk about on TV (and don't believe everything you hear), I mean a good, solid 10 feet on a well-contoured surface that tracks pure and feels firm. The current breed of greens grasses can do this far more often than those in past years without causing harm, and there is no turning back as far as the golfer is concerned.

Notice I said "far more often."

That doesn't mean always, and never should. There will always be reasons to mow grass higher and accept slower green speeds when environmental conditions warrant. Further, if you don't have the new grasses and equipment at your course, mowing close to produce fast greens will be detrimental to your mental health. But don't blame Augusta, Bethpage or Muirfield Village for showing just how much skill it takes to get a ball in the hole on glass surfaces. Admit it; you like to see these guys challenged with fast greens. And, if you are really honest with yourself, you'll say you enjoy the excitement of putting when the ball takes one more half turn before it stops and falls in the hole. Speed doesn't have to kill if you have the right grass. ■

Jon Scott is the vice president of agronomy for the PGA Tour.

## MAILBAG: MORE COURSES SHOULD JOIN AUDUBON



TO THE EDITOR:

You raise an excellent question in your editorial (GCN, March 2003). Are most golf courses in line with Audubon International and are they already practicing IPM? I think that the answer is yes.

I am in the process of becoming certified through Audubon International and have found that my IPM program fulfills many of the requirements. What superintendent doesn't watch weather conditions and scout to monitor disease pressure? More and more golf courses are updating to centrally controlled irrigation, installing environmentally responsible wash areas and building safer chemical storage facilities. Inviting a local school to participate in creating naturalized areas, putting up some bird houses and mapping your golf course are the additional requirements.

Why don't more superintendents write up a plan to fulfill these things, have it approved, then go back and implement and document that they are actually accomplishing these goals? Because it is time-consuming and can appear to be a lot of paperwork just to prove what we already know and do at our facility.

However, I recently witnessed a county official state that "we all know golf courses pollute." What will his response be when I tell him we are a Certified Sanctuary and I have the documentation to prove it? I think it is worth heading off the critics.

Sincerely,  
Scott Brooke, superintendent  
The Golf Club at Hawks Prairie  
Lacey, Wash.

## ROSE: OUR PLANTS WON'T PRODUCE TRANSGENIC POLLEN

TO THE EDITOR:

In a recent article ("Debate over Roundup Ready bent rages on" GCN, March 2003), Dr. Bob Harriman from Scotts Co. was quoted as saying, "Gene escape in male-sterile varieties is still possible because you still have fertility, gene flow and sexuality in half the system. It doesn't make it an ounce safer." Dr. Harriman does not understand that the male-sterile Penn A-4 plants containing the transgene for herbicide resistance cannot contaminate the environment because they have no pollen. The only truth in Bob Harriman's statement is that the seed we market will have some normal plants with normal pollen, which is no different from the Penn A-4 we market today. What needs to be clarified is that our transgenic plants will never produce fertile transgenic pollen. There lies the difference in our production practices. The Scotts/Monsanto production can and will pollinate, spreading transgenic glyphosate resistant pollen.

All the standard bentgrass production practices noted in the article are adequate for seed containment and have proven satisfactory for normal certified seed production. The new problem that is now presented is pollen containment. There are approximately 6,000 pollen grains produced for each seed. With a pollen grain contributing half the DNA to a seed, and in this case carrying the Roundup gene, pollen containment is essential to prevent gene trespass to other *Agrostis*

species. A study by Pure Seed Testing showed that transgenic pollen was received by *Agrostis* plants 3,000 feet away in the first year. The 11,000-acre control area does little good when pollen grains live one to three hours and the wind blows five miles per hour. Even with dedicated equipment, pollen trespass will contaminate the irrigation district and then move on to other areas in successive generations.

Sincerely,  
Bill Rose, president  
Hybrigen, Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green

## COOK DISPUTES ACTIVIST'S SCIENTIFIC CLAIMS

Editor's note: In response to several readers who questioned Jay Feldman's science in his Point "Golf contaminates environment" (GCN, March 2003), *Golf Course News* turned to Dr. Tom Cook, associate professor of horticulture at Oregon

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## CORRECTION

Due to a reporting error, GCN incorrectly stated that HybriGene was working on developing male sterile glyphosate tolerant bentgrass ("Debate over Roundup Ready bent rages on" GCN March 2003). HybriGene is working with male sterile glufosinate tolerant plants.

## Faster is not better

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Sadly though, if maintenance equipment technology and agronomic advancements continue to make even lower mowing heights possible, we'll certainly be left with putting greens as flat as billiard tables — everywhere. Flat greens are completely devoid of any interest and only test a golfer's ability to judge speed, rather than a combination of speed, slope and contour. The game will definitely suffer for it.

Instead of speed, emphasis should be placed on maintaining a true roll and a firm putting surface. In other words, as long as the green rewards a well-struck approach and the ball isn't bouncing off-line on its way to the hole, what does speed matter? Maintaining firm greens that roll true — as opposed to simply fast ones — will permit classic putting surfaces, with steep pitch and bold contours, to be retained and continue to provide the same challenge and enjoyment to contemporary golfers, and golfers of the future.

By raising mowing heights, steeply pitched and boldly contoured greens will be allowed to continue to do what they were designed to do: direct the strategy of a well-designed hole, reward well-struck approach shots and demand creativity and skill from golfers attempting to recover from their surrounds. And, moreover, in this age of environmental stewardship, a higher cut on the greens will yield a stronger grass plant, better able to ward off disease and drought without assistance from expensive artificial inputs.

Let's do what's best for golf. Being economically responsive and environmentally conscious in regard to putting speeds is not only smart — such an approach also yields many fringe benefits. The most interesting greens on older courses can be saved. And, even more exciting from my view, golf architects will be provided future opportunities to create new greens with distinct character. ■

Mike DeVries is the principal of the golf course architecture firm DeVries Designs Inc. He is based in Traverse City, Mich.

## GOLF COURSE NEWS POLL

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY  
[www.golfcoursenews.com](http://www.golfcoursenews.com)

Are ever-increasing green speeds good or bad for the game of golf?

