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FOR THE RECORD

A quarter of a century ago, when I started my first real job in this business as a cub reporter for GCSAA, one of my very first assigned tasks was to review, sort through and organize about a kazillion photos and slides that were carefully stored in cardboard boxes, brown paper bags and various other receptacles around the old association headquarters in Lawrence. It was like sorting through a vast haystack made up entirely of needles and my job was to carefully examine each needle, catalog it and store it lovingly in the correct location so it could easily be used at a moment's notice.

To my knowledge, that job has never been completed. I sure as hell managed to avoid it. I wouldn't be surprised if there's a 20-year-old summer intern sitting in Lawrence right now figuring out how to not accomplish that same task.

So it was déjà vu a few months ago when, upon starting another real job here at GCI, I ambitiously decided to update all of my contacts, subscriptions and memberships in various stuff. This seemed like a simple, practical thing to do until I began to figure out how many different magazines, newsletters, associations and business acquaintances I have. I'm one of those idiots who still has about five old-school Rolodexes (and countless shoeboxes) filled with business cards that need to be scanned and put into my Outlook contacts. I figure I'll be finished with the task in roughly 2017.

But, I plowed ahead to at least get back on the list for important magazines and chapter publications. So, the very first call I made was to my friend Dr. Kimberly Erusha at the USGA Green Section. (Note that I do not describe Kim as an "old" friend. I still remember when she was a grad student at the University of Nebraska.

Kim will be forever young to me.) I asked her to put me back on the list for the Green Section Record, the one publication I really wanted to receive.

The Record is, of course, the venerable cornerstone of golf agronomy information. If The New York Times is the "Old Gray Lady" the Record is the "Old Green Gentleman."

It has been through various incarnations, but the roots of the Record go back to 1921 – just a year after the Green Section was founded – when the USGA started publishing The Bulletin to begin to disseminate agronomic information to the greenkeepers

doc from Kentucky, who is this year's Green Section Award winner. Then I opened it up and started happily leafing through the usual awesome articles. That's when the magazine fell open to one of those cardboard inserts. I glanced down and saw that it read: "A Change in Direction."

Uh oh, I thought. Those are never good words. I read on to discover that this would be the last printed issue of the venerable Record.

A bummer, but not a surprise in the least. At a time when many advertising-based, for-profit print publications are giving up the ghost, it's probably

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of the day. That predates the formation of the GCSAA by five years and makes it by far the oldest information source in our happy little business. The current version of the Record was introduced nearly 50 years ago.

Since then, its editors have included legends like Marvin Ferguson, Al Radko, Bill Bengeyfield and – since 1990 – Jim Snow. I doubt there's been a USGA agronomist or leading scientist who didn't contribute over the years. No advertising, no overt agenda, no fluff – just useful information largely gathered and reported by men and women who visited hundreds of courses a year.

So, getting back on the mailing list for the Record was my top priority when I contacted Kim a few months ago. I was delighted to receive my copy in the mail a few weeks ago. I noted with pleasure that the cover featured Dan Potter, the great bug

more shocking that the Record was still arriving through the U.S. mail in the 10th year of the 21st century. I'll take a wild guess and say that producing, printing and mailing the Record cost easily a couple hundred-thousand dollars per year plus staff time. Frankly, that's money that could be used to support other programs and people at a time when USGA's budget is already being trimmed substantially.

The good news is that the Green Section had already launched a wonderful weekly e-newsletter that they believe will accomplish the same goals as the old Record and reach a wider audience because, notably, it's free. Like a copy? Then sign up for it at <http://gsportal.usga.org>.

So, as I mourn the loss of the Old Green Gentleman, I salute the folks in Far Hills for replacing it with a younger, hipper version that's available to all. **GCI**