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## THE BULLHORN

Before last February's GIS show, we decided to organize a "TweetUp" for our techie social media friends. The idea was to bring together supers and others who are using Twitter, Facebook, etc., to meet, greet and give some recognition. Fun idea... but predictably not as simple as it sounded.

You will not be surprised to learn the GC-SAA has strict rules about doing promotions or events on their show floor during their show. After much discussion with their wary but bemused staff, we decided the simplest thing to do was to go the "flash mob" route and do the thing in a way that didn't violate their rules.

Since GCI is...well, GCI...I had a vision of standing on the back of a flatbed truck in the Las Vegas Convention Center parking lot doing a re-enactment of the scene from "Independence Day" where the president grabs a bullhorn, makes a impassioned speech and rallies the people of Earth to defeat the alien invaders. We would Tweet out the time and place and our friends would flock to us and spontaneously sing "Give Peace a Chance." Hell, it might turn into a movement!

Well, the movement turned out to be about three dozen folks who gathered to witness our Super Social Media awards under the chilly, darkening Vegas skies. My hopes of a Woodstock-like crowd massed in front of me – old-school Zippo lighters raised in tribute – were a wee bit optimistic (although I think Justin Ruiz may have turned on his iPhone flashlight app and held it up at one point). In the final analysis, when given the option between shivering through an outdoor flash mob or heading to a casino, most folks will choose the latter. Lesson learned...but we'll be back next year with another TweetUp because it's still a cool idea.

But, it wasn't a complete loss because I did get a bullhorn out of the deal. Yup, our marketing manager (the lovely, talented Irene Sweeney) found me one of those battery-powered megaphones to sate my "Independence Day" fantasy. It now sits in my office gathering dust and waiting for my next boondoggle or an alien invasion, whichever comes first.

Yet, the dusty bullhorn serves a purpose. Its

presence on the shelf next to me is a reminder that GCI has what used to be called a "bully pulpit." By virtue of the fact that we print and mail 25,000 copies of this thing every month and some percentage of y'all accidentally read it, we are not dissimilar to the preachers of old who briefly command the interest of otherwise sleepy Sunday parishioners with fire-and-brimstone tirades. We have both the opportunity and the obligation to lead through our words and, hopefully, create change.

We try to lead on issues. Last month, every word of the entire issue screamed "it's time to get serious about managing water resources." We try to educate. I thought Gary Grigg's June article on the 10 characteristics of great superintendents should be required reading

for every turf student. We pick at the scabs of controversial problems like bacterial wilt. We've talked a lot about jobs and the plight of unemployed superintendents and the many qualified assistants who are "stuck" with no way to move up. We document what's going on in the market with research like our State of the Industry report and the Rating the Industry study that ranked

how supers view suppliers. We also shine a bright light on things that matter, like skin cancer, substance abuse, depression and – on a brighter note – awesome groups like the Wee One Foundation, Rounds4Research and the Wives of Turf.

This is the time when we figure out how to use the bullhorn for next year. We begin planning our 2013 editorial coverage by talking to a lot of you guys. Mike Zawacki and I reach out to supers and others who we know will give us the unvarnished truth about what we do well and what we can do better. During that process last month, Mike was talking story ideas with Tim Moraghan and Tim commented that we are at our best when we're out ahead of the market and dealing with the big topics still bubbling under the surface. Sage advice, thought I.

So what's your story? What's bubbling under the surface of your world that you think we might be crazy enough to cover? What's the next big thing that deserves attention now? Let me know. The bullhorn awaits. **GCI**



**Pat Jones**  
Editorial director and publisher

## GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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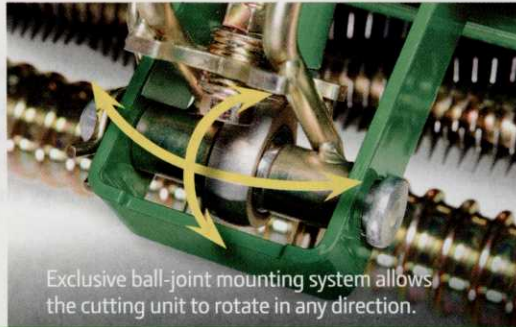




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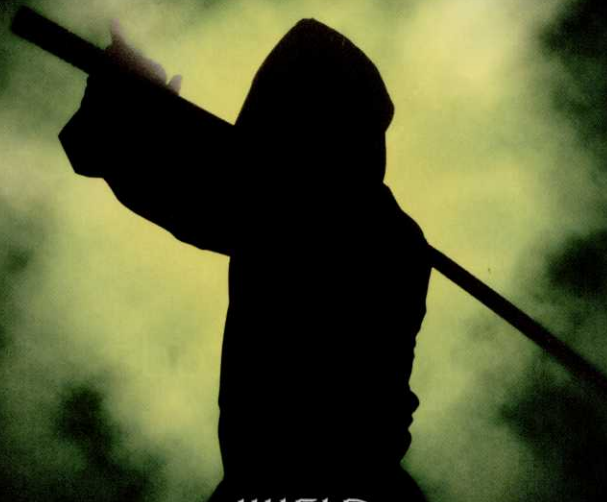


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hear from you.

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with your thoughts  
and opinions.

FEEDBACK

## So true

You continue to amaze with your great take on using the communications of today's world ("Anti-Social Behavior," April 2012). Love the last line, it's so true: "If you don't figure that out, the guy who takes your job certainly will."

Half the people in a recent poll think Facebook will not be around forever, duh. But something new will keep coming out, and those who stay abreast will succeed. Great writing and great vision on the fact that people want "a little taste of everything."

Jeff R. Wendel, CGCS  
Executive Director  
Iowa Turfgrass Institute

To read this column, enter [bit.ly/PmkaQ6](http://bit.ly/PmkaQ6) into your Web browser.

## One more time

Thanks for posting Adam's blog ("Plum Perfect," June 2012). Many of us have said this to ourselves and our staffs. Sometimes we even listen to our own words. It's a message that bears repeating over and over and over!

Dave Davies, CGCS  
TPC Stonebrae  
Hayward, Calif.

What a great article ("Plum Perfect," June 2012) full of truth. I'm glad I had my first child 8 years after being a superintendent or I might not have had enough trials and tribulations to realize what is really important in my life. It's not those 18 holes of golf I relentlessly tried to make picture perfect every day and every moment I was there.

I hope many people in our business read this article and realize the course will always be there, but our time with loved ones and family passes by us every day. That grass has no feelings or appreciation for what we do, and it never thanked me or told me I was the best like my wife and son do. So who really deserves the attention we, as superintendents, focus our energy and time on?

Scott Giles  
Superintendent  
Greencastle Golf Club  
Greencastle, Pa.

To read this column, enter [bit.ly/LYXih6](http://bit.ly/LYXih6) into your Web browser.

## Bullseye

Bob Lohmann's article, "Design it forward" in the June issue of GCI was right on target. Let's not get so caught up in the idea that moving tees and eliminating hazards will keep courses economically viable.

A well-designed golf course with strategic features will keep golfers interested, challenged and, most importantly, playing. "Playability" does not mean bland.

We are in such a stressful economic time for most courses and, of course, we need to be cognizant of the "time" and "difficulty" issues





that are a definite reality today. The worry, however, is that "the baby will be thrown out with the bath water"... reducing good courses to a shadow of what they once were. It is so important that a golf architect at least review design changes, as Bob states in his article, so that courses retain

their strategic value.

That, coupled with the concept that women want shorter, easier courses is not, I believe, connected to a real understanding of how women think and what they want.

Victoria Martz, ASGCA  
Victoria Martz Golf Design Inc.  
Jacksonville, Fla.

**Editor's Note** — We made a slight *faux pas* in editing Jeff Brauer's May column ("Design for maintenance," page 70). In the subsection about greens surrounds, the wording should be "6 feet between the green and bunker for turning," and not "6 inches..." We recognized too late that that would be one heck of a tight turn on a mower.

## Go West

*Editor's Note: The following article was written in response to GCI's special July Water Issue, especially Bruce William's piece, "An LA Story." Enter bit.*

*ly/MEqP9w into your Web browser to check out the July issue's digital edition.*



In the many of the Western states private parties can "own" water, both surface and ground. These waters can and quite often are separated from the land that they may be on. In the West, just like in the old cowboy movies, people fight over water rights. No one can take this property right that is owned by you based upon the greater good as perceived by another. Your use can be regulated based upon seniority and or appropriations, but I am unaware of any takings or condemnation of water rights in the West.

Now, each state has its own set of laws, rules and regulations. Here's a wild one for you. If my memory serves me right, in the 1990s there were only eight adjudicated basins in California. If you were not in an adjudicated basin, you could drill a well for any use by paying a nominal fee. I think it was about \$50 and there was no approval process. You just showed up at the county offices, paid your fee and left with a permit. There were some recording and reporting issues- location, drilling log, perforation detail, sealing the surface - and an inspection. Does this surprise you? It shocked the hell out of me... you couldn't do that in most of the other states out here. I had just kind of assumed that California would be the most restrictive. Wrong.

I have a working knowledge of water rights based upon my time in the West and some development experience along with knowing some of the big private water "players." These water guys are a lot like oil guys. They can make literally millions or possibly billions or they can go bust if they buy into a downturn. It's really interesting.

Armen Suny  
Owner  
Suny Golf  
Colorado Springs, Colo.

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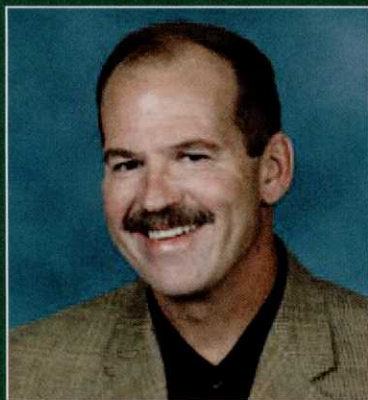
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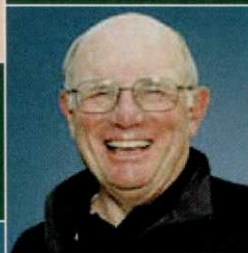
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# A new tradition

**GCI** columnist and industry legend Dennis Lyon has been on the mend in recent months after suffering serious injuries as, while taking his faithful pooch Putter for a walk during the last holiday season, he was hit by a truck.

We're thrilled that Dennis is expected to make a full recovery, even with the significant medical expenses that have built up. Fortunately, one of the perks of the golf industry is that a helping hand is never too far away.

As involved as Dennis has been with the Colorado Golf Association (as a past president, for starters), it's no wonder they wanted to help him out. He, along with colleagues Ed Mate, director of the Colorado Golf Association; Gail Godbey, secretary and Bill Jewell, golf manager for the city of Lakewood, Colo., have run a "Tradition" tournament since 2004, in which some players wear turn-of-the-century golf attire and use a limited selection of clubs.

This year, the Tradition made a slight change, renamed in honor of Dennis Lyon, raising money to help him with medical expenses with a round at the Meadow Hills Golf Course in Aurora.

"We had 60 people participate," says Anne Bley, director of finance for the CGA. "There were architects, superintendents – Dennis had touched us all in some way. He's helped us so much over the years. He's just the kind of guy you want to do something nice for."

Besides just the players, his whole family showed up for the occasion, including his children and grandchildren. Dennis himself only played a few holes, since much of his time was spent catching up with people who had been cheering him



Check out our photo slideshow of Dennis with some of the players in the "Dennis Lyon Tradition Tournament" at [bit.ly/GCILyonMH](http://bit.ly/GCILyonMH).

on in his recovery.

"It was just wonderful to me," he says. "There were so many colleagues and friends and family members that played."

The tournament itself raised \$5,000 in net proceeds, with an additional \$5,000 provided by The Wee One Foundation. After the round, the players had lunch, including several of Dennis's favorites like hamburgers and cole slaw, and visited.

"During lunch, some kind words were spoken by several people," he says. "That just meant a lot to me."

With this kind of backup, Dennis will be back to form in no time at all, we hope.

"I was so seriously injured, and people have just been so kind to me," he says. "I know I'll keep getting better."



## SAND SWAP AT MUIRFIELD



**F**or the first time in its 121-year history, the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Muirfield has sourced its bunker sand from outside the East Lothian grounds. In an historic move brought about by dwindling home-grown supplies, the club opted for a new, free-draining sand supplied by Hugh King & Co.

The venue began the significant sand-exchange program in March swapping materials in all 148 of its on-course bunkers and three practice bunkers.

"We have always used native sand," said Colin Irvine, course manager at Muirfield. "Before we moved over to Hugh King's sand, we quarried sand off the course but the supply was running out and we were beginning to get inconsistencies. It

meant sand in some of the bunkers was blowing away while others weren't draining as well as we liked, so we decided to do an exchange."

The landmark swap was made 16 months ahead of the 16th running of the Open Championship at Muirfield. More importantly, the sand had to win over the support of the members of the renowned club.

"It had to be free-draining and it had to be the right colour," Irvine explained. "We tried quite a few types of sand and worked with Hugh King to come up with a sand type that we liked and the members would like. In fact, a lot of people haven't even noticed the change, which is great. As far as I am concerned, no news is good news."