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## Get well soon, Dennis!



**T**he GCI staff is eagerly awaiting columnist Dennis Lyon's recovery from injuries after being struck by a truck while walking his dog, Putter, Dec. 20. The driver of the truck stopped and called 911, while his faithful pooch ran home, alerting

Dennis's family. He sustained injury to his left leg, pelvis, back and head and was taken to the University of Colorado Hospital. His son, Corey Lyon, has been

journaling Dennis's recovery online at [www.caringbridge.org/visit/Dennislyon1](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/Dennislyon1). We'll also be running any updated information we get on his progress on the GCI Twitter feed and Facebook page.

Currently, Dennis is successfully done with his surgeries and recovering at Kindred Hospital in Denver. Though he's going to be off his feet for a while, we're pulling for him to be back on his game as soon as possible – and not just because we like reading his columns.

If you'd like to send notes and get well cards, address them to:

Dennis Lyon  
c/o Corey Lyon  
1456 S. Grand Baker Cir.  
Aurora, CO 80018



## ROLL CALL

**Charles Kornmann** has been named superintendent at Lee Park Golf Course, Aberdeen, S.D.

The United States Golf Association selected turfgrass scientist **Dr. Wayne Hanna**, of Chula, Ga., as the recipient of the 2012 USGA Green Section Award.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California (GCSANC) will recognize **Richard H. Harris** and **Robert D. "Bo" Links** for their exceptional contributions to the game of golf.

## Season's Greenings

The GCI Facebook page is a great place for superintendents to share top tips and industry news. We've had a few oddballs post about turfgrass throughout the seasons, but this is the first time turfgrass itself has posted on our Wall. A pair of season's greetings images appeared in our

feed from the species we love to hate: *Poa annua*. "I wish all my friends and enemies a very Merry Christmas," says *Poa*, showing that a holiday wish can bring us together, even when the entire industry can't decide what to do with the plant.

We look forward to our time together (and our battles to the death) in the new year with you too, *Poa*.



# An app for a tap



A new smartphone service seeks to answer the age-old question heard around the course: "Where's the beer cart?"

Scan4beer, a service of Retail Action Development, uses QR codes and a golfer's smartphone to connect a player and his drink of choice. A unique code is posted in each golf cart, and a quick scan by a smartphone bring up a remote menu via a special web app or a free application downloaded from iTunes or the Android Marketplace. The menu isn't just limited to beer, but also other drinks and available snacks.

Once the order is placed, an algorithm tells the beer cart driver where the golfer is likely to be by the time it arrives there, as well as plots a direct route to the cart, cutting down wait time and bumping up concessions revenue with greater efficiency.

The service is available nationally in the first quarter of 2012.



Bill Rose started a name for himself in the seed market when he founded Roselawn Seed 53 years ago. Today, he and the Rose crew continue their tradition with the launch of Pure Seed.

# A ROSE

*by another name*

The legendary Bill Rose and daughter Crystal Rose Fricker are leading their family back into the seed distribution business after a five-year break. Why are they doing it and what does it mean for superintendents?

By Pat Jones



CHRIS WILSON





**T**he turfgrass seed business is a strange and mysterious thing to outsiders. It would seem to be simple: you grow it, you price it based on supply and demand and you sell it. Instead, it's a complex chain involving corn and wheat prices, market trends in overseeding and renovation, genetic engineering, plant patents and, of course, weather.

That's why after 25 years of observing the endlessly volatile seed business, I have concluded that the only predictable thing about it is that Bill Rose will always be right at the heart of it.

Rose, now 81, started from humble beginnings as a farmer when he founded Roselawn Seed 53 years ago. (His previous career had been interesting: he was an officer and pilot for the Air Force Strategic Air Command in the 1950s.

Rose is getting back in the seed game because "the market needs it. They need us," he says.

You know, back when we seriously thought the Russians might nuke us and we might have to nuke them back, Bill was sitting in the cockpit of a big plane carrying those bombs. I kid you not.)

In 1970, Rose started Turf-Seed, Inc., and later its sister company Pure-Seed Testing, to provide reliable, high-quality seed to golf courses and other professional customers. He drove the formation of the Penncross Bentgrass Association with other growers to bring the Penn State varieties developed by Dr. Joe Duich and other researchers to the market under the now famous Tee-2-Green brand name.

Golf boomed... and so did Rose's companies and the use of their bentgrasses and other varieties around the world. For several decades, Penncross was synonymous with cool-season putting greens.

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The bentgrass market matured, more varieties from more companies emerged and the golf boom slowed to a crawl. Yet, the Turf-Seed name and products still commanded enough of the market to attract the attention of the ginormous Scotts Company. In 2005, Rose and his family sold Turf-Seed, Inc., and its varieties to Scotts. Rose focused his energies on Tee-2-Green and the forage business of Rose Agri-Seed, but it looked like the sunset of his long and illustrious career was nearing.

But, as ESPN's Lee Corso is fond of saying: Not so fast, my friend.

Rumors began swirling in mid-2011 that Scotts was ready to get out of the professional seed business and that Rose and his family were interested in reacquiring many of the Turf Seed varieties.

GCI recently learned that those



Rose was a strong factor in the development of Penncross Bentgrass, which was often the wall-to-wall turf choice for growing courses at the time.

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rumors were true. The family has now launched a new company, simply called Pure Seed, to re-enter the seed sales market. In mid-December, I lined up an exclusive with my old friend Bill – the Lion in Winter of the seed business – and his very savvy daughter Crystal Rose Fricker, an accomplished breeder in her own right who will actually lead the new company as president.

**What made you decide to re-acquire these varieties?**

**Bill:** That's a pretty easy question... because the market needs it. They need us. Lots of our (former) distributors have wondered where they'd get the seed in the future given the changes in the market so we felt a responsibility to get back into the business of supplying them and their customers.

**Crystal:** It's also a matter of wanting to take care of our original varieties in the professional turf market and continue to supply them. We wanted to reconnect to our old friends in the industry and take care of these varieties. It's hard to develop them and nurture them and not be able to sell and steward them in the market.

**Explain how you'll operate differently with the formation of the new company, Pure Seed.**

**Crystal:** We're a really integrated company now. We have the research company, Pure-Seed Testing to develop new varieties, the marketing, seed coating and packaging business, Pure Seed and Roselawn Seed to grow production. The new company gives us an avenue to get into the marketplace. This makes us a unique company because we can develop varieties, produce good quality seed, handle seed coating, blending and packaging – all aspects of the turfgrass industry – to bring our products to market the way it should be done.

We're now able to be a fully integrated, one-stop shop for the professional business. It's through a lot of Dad's vision that we're here today.

**Bill, what did you miss most about selling into the golf/turf market the past six or seven years?**

**Bill:** What I really missed were the field days we always held in North Carolina and Oregon. We got to see and visit with customers from around the U.S. and overseas and I always loved that. Everyone had a chance to see the seed, the varieties... the total picture.

**So you're bringing back the famous field days?**

**Bill:** Absolutely. The first one will be at the end of June in Oregon.

**I'll be there!**

**Bill:** You damn well better be!

**Which varieties are you most excited about?**

**Crystal:** We have 23 commercially named varieties and several experimental, so we're excited about all of them. Probably the most notable are (ryegrasses) Brightstar SLT, Silver Dollar, Citation Fore, Tar Heel 2, Dynamic 2, Gazelle 2 and our bluegrasses – Jump Start, Moonlight SLT, Right, and North Star (a top European variety). We also have a new seashore paspalum and some really good,



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drought-tolerant and glyphosate-tolerant experimentals.

**Will you continue to pursue the Roundup-Ready concept for varieties?**

**Crystal:** We're not trying to produce transgenic species, just breeding for natural tolerance to glyphosate and other herbicides.

**Bill:** I'm excited about the (tolerant) ryegrasses. They'll be tremendous for overseeding and then doing a clean-up with an application of glyphosate.

**We've heard that ryegrass prices will be up substantially next year. What are you telling distributors and superintendents about pricing?**

**Bill:** Get your orders in! (Laughs) We don't know yet about production but early orders are going to be beneficial to customers.

**Crystal:** We did a pretty good job of getting perennial rye out for production, but we don't have huge quantities right now. It's extremely important for folks to order now so we can



**Bill:** "What I really missed were the field days we always held in North Carolina and Oregon. We got to see and visit with customers from around the U.S. and overseas and I always loved that."

get correct production in fields. Pricing will be strong simply because it's going to be hard to get our varieties.

**How will Pure Seed be structured and explain to me for the umpteenth time how Tee-2-Green fits into the equation?**

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**Crystal:** The Pure Seed board includes me as president, Bill as vice president and then Ed Rose (Bill's son who runs Roselawn) and Cara Rose Tuggle (Bill's other daughter). Obviously, we'll work closely with Pure-Seed Testing, Roselawn and Tee-2-Green to take advantage of being as integrated as we can be.

**Bill:** The distinction is that Tee-2-Green markets the bentgrass varieties. Pure Seed is a distributor for Tee-2-Green and production done by the Penncross Bentgrass Association.

**Has it been hard to re-establish local distribution and your supply chain after a six-year absence from the market?**

**Crystal:** We've been lucky on that. We got a really nice welcome back from a lot of our old friends. Russ Hayworth is our sales manager and he had continued selling forage grasses (during our absence from the professional market) and worked for Turf-Seed before, so he has the contacts. Lew Sharp, who also works for Tee-2-Green, is also in the field talking to distributors and customers.



On top of Pure Seed and Roselawn Seed for production, Pure Seed Testing works to develop new varieties.

Plus, I've been on the phone and dad's been on the phone. I also went to China recently to figure out their needs over there.

**Bill:** I'm really looking forward to the golf course show (GIS) this year. That'll be our chance to get face to face again.

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