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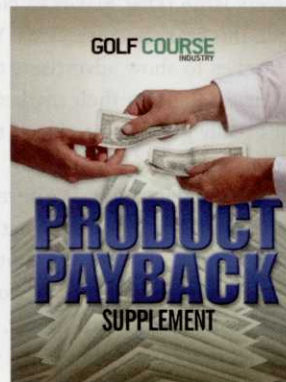
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## LOOKING AHEAD

The last three years have been a helluva lot of fun here at GCI's intergalactic headquarters. As I'm planning for next year and thinking about what we've done well and what we can still improve on, here's my scorecard for how I believe we're doing.

Serving readers is the bottom line for any magazine, so it's always at the top of my list. What have we done to help you do your job and live your life better? Well, for one thing, we've tried to make GCI reader-driven – quite literally. The vast majority of our print and online content is written by current and former superintendents and other experts who have their feet on the ground in the market every day. It's all about relevancy and hitting the topics you guys are really concerned about agronomically, professionally and personally.

I wake up every day feeling absolutely gobsmacked that we've attracted the likes of Bruce Williams, Tim Moraghan, Henry Delozier, Dr. John Kaminiski, Monroe Miller, Dennis Lyon, Terry Buchen and Ron Dodson to our editorial team. Those voices, that experience and their willingness to tell it like it is have been key to our success.

It's paying off. I'm very proud to say that in a readership study done last month, we learned GCI has the best cover-to-cover readership in our market. Nearly 47 percent of you said you read GCI cover to cover and 53 percent of you read every issue. That makes us No. 1 in readership in this crazy business, kids. Yes, we do those studies to show advertisers that GCI is a great investment for their marketing dollars, but it's really gratifying to know that what we're doing appeals to you guys.

We are in the content business. We develop great information and then figure out what the heck to do with it. In the old days, the content business consisted entirely of print. We would write, edit, print, mail and repeat. Now, we have at least a half-dozen platforms to get you info: print, website, digital edition, mobile app, social media, e-newsletters, video, podcasts, etc. The Superintendent Radio Network is a perfect example. Who knew that so many of you would use an iTunes-based network to

feed your brain with short conversations with experts and authorities around the industry? Love that thing!

In the next year, you'll also see us creating iPad-based publications for golf and the other markets our parent company, GIE Media, serves. In our most recent study of how superintendents use digital toys, we found 40 percent of you have an iPad or table device. The experts on such things tell us that will climb to 75 or 80 percent within a couple of years. If you're one of those folks who already has an iPad, go to the App Store and download "A Garden Life," a publication we developed for the garden center market, to see what the future looks like. It will blow your mind.

And that commitment to using communications technology is also paying off. In the same readership study, you guys said GCI is the leader in digital and web communications by a 2-to-1 margin over the closest competitor. Nice!

It's all too easy to sit in Cleveland or wherever and pretend we know what's happening in the market. Instead, we get on airplanes and come to you. We attend a ton of

conferences, regional shows, chapter meetings and national events just to listen to what you guys think and track the trends and topics that matter to you. We also brought readers into our offices this year to get their candid opinions about what we do well and what we stink at. The consensus was that we're at our best when we're leading the market and talking about topics no one else will touch.

The other way we connect is through social media. People think I spend my day on Facebook and Twitter. I wish. Instead, it's something our entire team does in little dribs and drabs throughout the day. But it's our job to stay on top of what's going and break news when it happens. But, social media also lets us bond with readers we haven't even met yet and create relationships that lead to great stories.

I'm perhaps most proud that the readers said GCI is their No. 1 source for new ideas, opinions and trends. That means we are connecting and that means we're doing things right. In the end, that's all that matters. GCI



**Pat Jones**  
Editorial director and publisher

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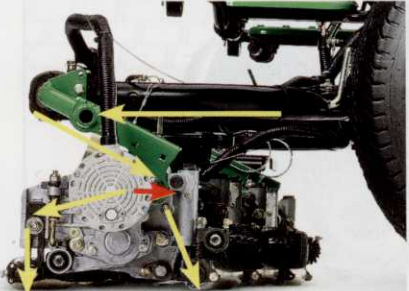


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We'd like to hear from you.

E-mail us at [gci@gie.net](mailto:gci@gie.net) with your thoughts and opinions.

## Remembering Stan

*EDITOR'S NOTE: News of Stanley Zontek's sudden passing in late August came at the very tail end of the September production deadline. Publisher and editorial director Pat Jones had just enough time to re-author his Parting Shots column to pay tribute to his friend. Pat's column generated a lot of feedback.*

I just wanted to let you know that I enjoyed your story about Stan Zontek. It is a tragic loss for our industry. We all loved Stan. Thanks so much for your kind words about our fallen brother.

**Mark Kuhns, CGCS**  
Baltusrol Golf Club  
Somerville, N.J.

All I can say is extremely well done. Thanks, Pat... tear in eye and gratitude in my heart.

We were lucky to have him and "The Game" was certainly lucky to have him.

**Kevin Davies**  
KDS Marketing  
Chester Springs, Pa.

Great article in Stan's honor. As always, you did us proud. Stan had a silver tongue... you, my friend, own the silver pencil.

**Matt Shaffer**  
Director of golf course operations  
Merion Golf Club  
Ardmore, Pa.

Your piece on Stanley was nicely done and reflected what he was about. He would have truly enjoyed and appreciated it.

**Kimberly S. Erusha, Ph.D**  
Managing Director  
USGA Green Section

You can read Pat's column, "For Stanley" by entering [bit.ly/PqNBzo](http://bit.ly/PqNBzo) into your Web browser.

## To make a donation

Stan Zontek's family has chosen a private burial in Cape May, N.J. Donations in Stanley's memory may be made to the following organizations:

**American Diabetes Association**  
**Stanley J. Zontek Memorial**  
PO Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312  
1 (800) 232-3472  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

**PA Turf Research Innovation Fund**  
**Penn State University**  
c/o PA Turf Research Innovation Fund  
240 Agricultural Administration Building  
University Park, PA 16802

**The Turfgrass Information Center**  
**(home of the USGA Turfgrass Information File)**  
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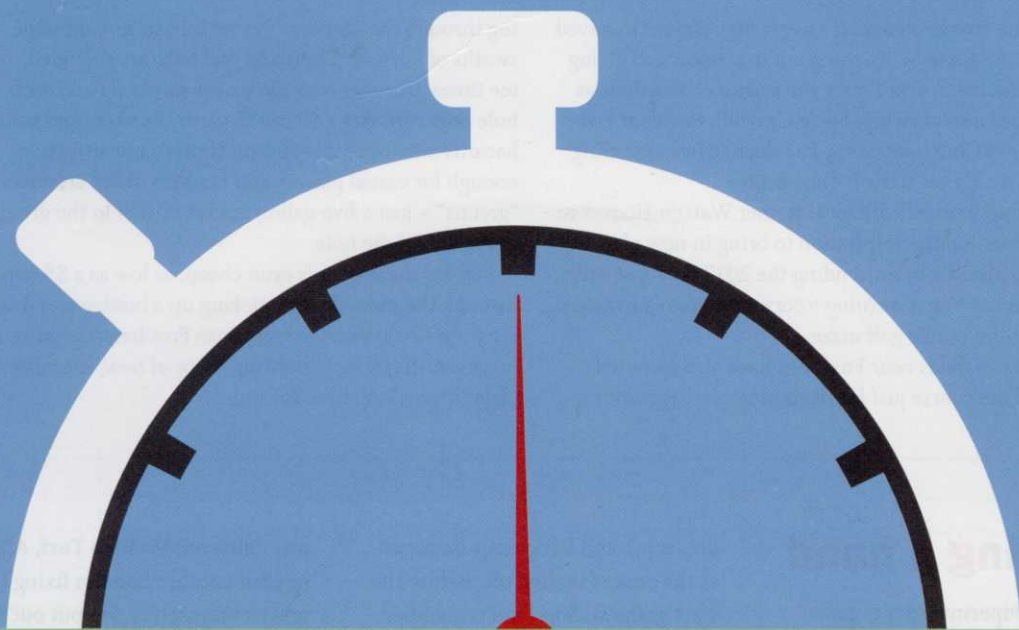


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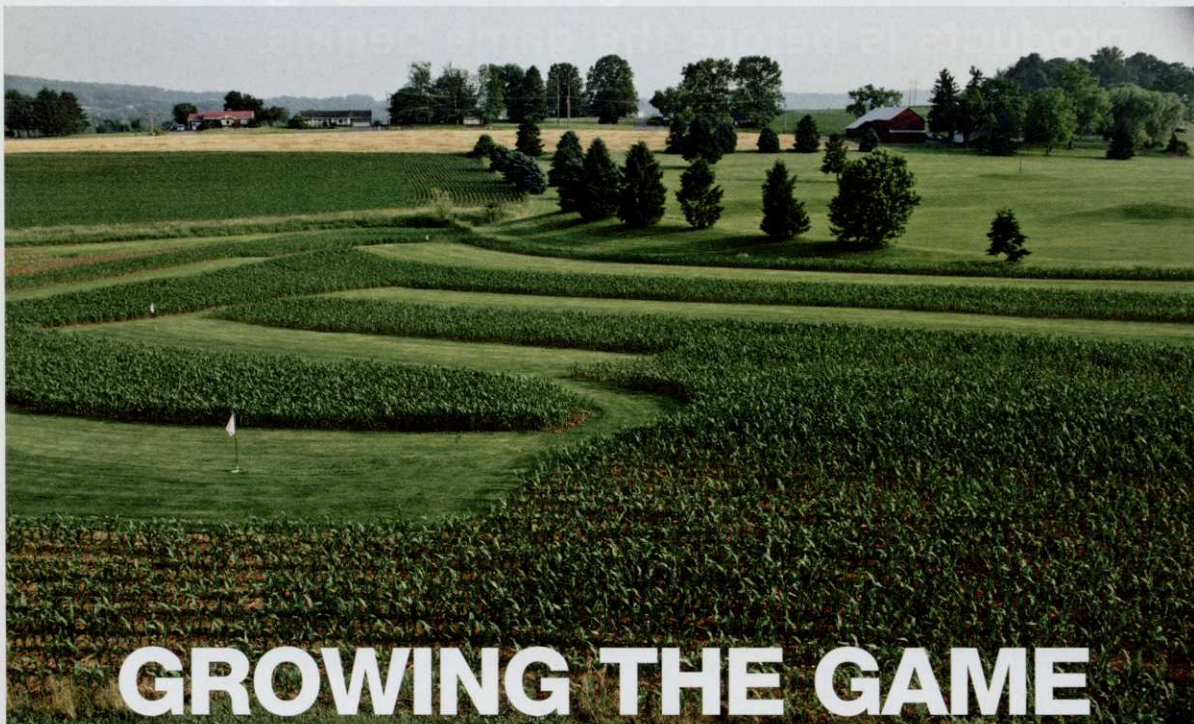
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\*Plant performance assumes the presence of disease pressure.

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## GROWING THE GAME

**S**ome course owners try to get new players involved in the game by reaching out to schools and giving kids a chance to experience the pristine conditions as they learn a solid swing. Steve Graybill, owner at Foxchase Golf Club in Stevens, Pa., does so by combining golf with a classic harvest-time event.

Graybill worked with local farmer Warren Hoover to put into action the inspiration to bring in new players he realized while attending the 2012 Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas: turning a corn maze into a five-acre, open-to-the-public golf maze.

The corn fields near Foxchase have also sprouted a nine-hole course just for beginning players, wind-

ing through the scenic stalks with 10 to 15-yard-wide swaths of fairway. Clubs and golf balls are provided, tee times are whenever the player shows up and each hole only runs from 40 to 125 yards. Bunkers and water hazards are noticeably absent. If that's not attractive enough for casual players and families, there aren't any "greens" – just a five-gallon bucket buried in the ground at the end of the hole.

Playing the course is even cheap, as low as a \$5 trip through the nine, though picking up a hotdog and drink is a little extra. With the response Foxchase has gotten, however, they'll be harvesting crops of new, interested players for a long time to come.

### Lending a hand

**A**ussie superintendents came together in support of a golf club that was vandalized earlier this year, helping to replace damaged turf. Victoria's Drouin Golf Club lost six greens when they were sprayed with Arsenal Xpress back in April.

Though superintendent Jason Allan tried to help the course weather the chemical onslaught, the herbicide

did its job and left greens damaged as the winter melted off. Before the start of the season (you remember that spring begins in September in Australia, right?), the club had to make the difficult choice to do some resurfacing.

Allan first got help from the National Golf Club, which donated more than 30,000 square feet of bentgrass turf, worth more than \$40,000. Once the replacement sod

was delivered by Anco Turf, Allan needed another hand in fixing the greens themselves. He put out a call for help, and more than 50 turf pros from area courses and volunteers showed up to make short work of turning the course green again. Not only were the greens repaired, volunteers also laid out the new 19th green, which had been in construction but stalled thanks to the vandalism.



# Catnapped?

There are scads of dogs riding along with superintendents, but cats have been earning their keep on the course for just as long.

But the disappearance of one feline has one golf course in a frenzy recently. The Palmira Golf Course in St. John, Ind., has more than 30 course kitties, keeping tabs on the small pest population and being friendly with players – they're all rescues, residing in the course's maintenance area.

"We take care of them," says Kelly Nicpon, course owner. "If we've got a cat on the property, we'll catch them and get them fixed. A lot of the time, the vet will clip their ear for us so we know if they leave and come back."

Among the clowder is Muffins, a white short-haired cat who hops up on golf carts for a ride or poses for a photo.



That is, she did until she vanished from the course earlier this season.

Though cats are known to wander, Nicpon suspects foul play. Out of all of the Palmira cats, none has ever been picked up by a predator.

"We think someone took her," says Nicpon, "because she was very affectionate. She would sit on a green or jump on a cart with somebody. She'd get on the tractors with the guys, sit on their laps and mow the lawn with them."

On July 8, before Muffins (also called Snowball) disappeared, the course received a phone call from a mysterious woman who was concerned that the cat was a stray. Nicpon says they reassured the caller that Muffins had a caring home – even in the past winter, they had arranged to have a tumor cut from her ear, leaving her with a very distinct look.

The very next day, the normally gregarious cat was nowhere to be found. Superintendent Bill Zientara let Nicpon know right away when one of his favorite cats was missing. They started by contacting press to get the word out when they remembered the woman on the phone.

Nicpon tried to go through the call log from the past day to track down the mysterious caller to follow that lead, but the number had vanished into the mass of phone calls the course receives daily. They've gone so far as to subpoena AT&T to discover the caller's number, and are waiting on that information to try to confront the potential catnapper.

"It's been in the paper, on Facebook, on the radio," says Nicpon. "Our next step is just to try to call the people who called and see if it was this woman or not. I don't know what will happen. Maybe she'll have a change of heart."

## If we told you... Well, we'd have to kill you

You wouldn't believe some of the new John Deere equipment and turfcare innovations GCI was privy to during big green's exclusive 2012 Feedback event.

Deere brought equipment dealers and golf course superintendents from around the globe to Duke University Golf Club to give their no-holds-barred opinions on five areas of turf equipment in various prototype stages. For example, it was super cool to ride a prototype of a... Okay, we've been sworn to secrecy about that. Regarding quality of cut, what knocked our socks off was the... Actually, our lips are sealed about that, as well, and if we say more Deere's product engineering team will probably put a hit out on us.

We did get Mike Koppen, Deere's product line marketing manager, who said, on the record, that the feedback events are extremely helpful in assisting Deere on the innovations they eventually bring to market.

"What we learn through these feedback sessions is whether we're 'go' or 'no go' on a lot of these innovations," he says. "We're also at an early enough stage on some of this equipment so that, depending on the feedback, we can go back and make the necessary changes before we introduce the equipment to another focus group at another time over the next year."

As for the health of the overall industry, Koppen says there's a lot of cautious optimism among superintendents and equipment dealers.

"2012 has definitely been an interesting year for the golf industry and for superintendents and dealers," Koppen says. "All indications are that rounds are up and supers are looking to make equipment investments. We're (forecasting) a steady climb, but (spending) will never be what it once was.

"Again, a lot of this remains to be seen," he added. "However, we're remaining optimistic."

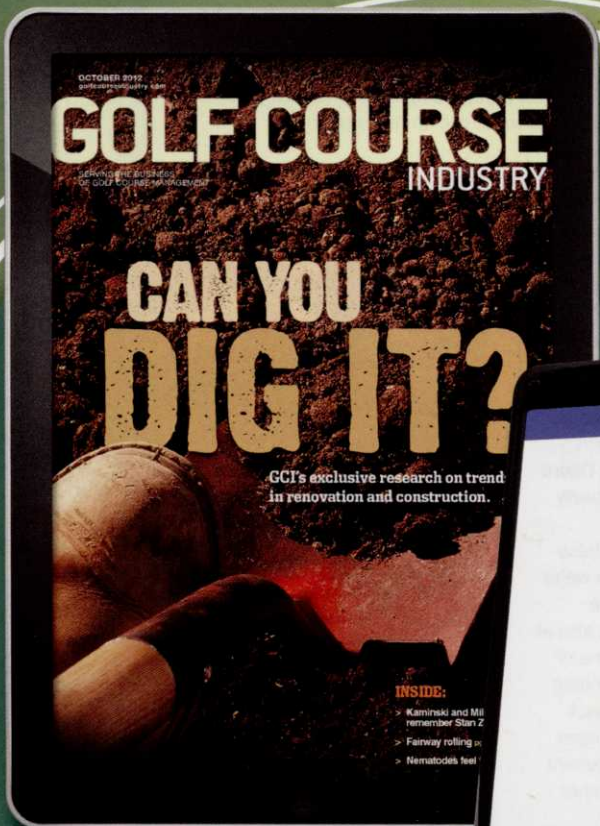
Tier IV – the transition to new diesel emission standards – is this fall's hot equipment topic, Koppen adds.

"Each of the manufacturers are handling (Tier IV) in their own way," he says. "Deere has been working with other components of our enterprise – like our agriculture division – that have already gone through this transition. The bottom line is that the engines you're going to see in the future are fuel efficient and will have more electronics in them because you need to govern all of that exhaust before it's released. We'll be working with all of our dealers to train them and get them up to speed. The days of the simple diesel engine are gone."





# REVOLUTIONARY CHOICES



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