

## Off The Fringe

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In the book, Hunter is CEO of Col-inx, a small course management company in Colorado Springs. Described by his creator as a “jaded rascal,” he faces the inevitable showdown between his professional and personal lives, failing to strike an amenable balance between the relationships in his life and his passion for the game.

Despite some similarities between him and the often appealingly flawed Hunter, Simpson says his main character isn't necessarily his alter ego, but he admits he did draw upon personal experiences, not to mention those of others involved in the industry, while writing the novel.

“Hunter and other figures in the book are composites of folks I've met along life's path,” Hunter says, noting that he's added certain embellishments to play up the entertaining conflict he portrays.

“Stories are rampant in the industry,” he says. “You go to conferences and hear funny stories about spouses or significant others complaining. The faces of employees change, but the problems and issues don't change industry wise.”

**Is anything sacred in *Behind the #\$\$%\*& Green*?  
Probably not, Simpson admits.**

With ribald honesty, Simpson educates Hunter about many of life's and the profession's hazards — the love of, or perhaps obsession with, the game some call “Scottish Madness,” golf course design, modern technology, long hours, high turnover rates, entrepreneurship, marriage, and, yes, divorce.

While no concrete statistics reveal that the golf course industry has a staggeringly high divorce rate, many in the industry — Simpson included —

## Seed Market Defined by Strengthening Markets, Stable Prices, Expert Says

By Susan H. Samudio

Many of you noticed there was not enough seed of many of the elite cultivars to go around this year. By spring, you were hard pressed to get the varieties you wanted. This problem will continue until harvest of the 2004 crop as more cultivars become sold out.

Last year's market correction was drastic because seed field plow-outs were coupled with a drought situation in most production areas, and yields were off by an average of 5 percent to 25 percent depending on species. By early summer, most species no longer had carryover from past years, which had kept prices down. With the seed shortage, prices of most species increased somewhat but are nowhere near reaching historic highs.

Compared to last year, this summer's production is forecast to be higher, but not

as high as many are calling for. Most seed companies were able to place their desired acres with farmers. There is a lot of competition from crops like wheat and corn in placing acreage with farmers. Estimates are that grass seed acreage increased 10 percent to 20 percent over 2002-2003 levels, so more acres will be available for 2004 harvest.

Acreage for most species is still lower than it was several years ago. Yields this summer are expected to be “average” at most and possibly down 10 percent to 20 percent, especially on fields that did not fare well through the winter. Coupled with virtually no carryover of last year's crop, seed buyers can look to a season of strengthening markets and stable prices.

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believe the profession is a breeding ground for marital woes.

So far, Simpson says, the book has been well-received, and based on the reader comments posted on his publisher's Web site, [www.PublishAmerica.com](http://www.PublishAmerica.com), he's not kidding.

“Every superintendent in America needs to read this book and then send a copy to everyone they know,” writes Jack from Florida.

Despite a definite slant toward the male persuasion, the book even has gained some female fans.

“I couldn't care less about golf,” writes Judy from Arizona. “But after listening to my husband laugh hysterically for two days, several times actually in tears, I took his advice and read the book. The chapter where Hunter visits the urologist's office, along with the one when he takes his children miniature golfing ... might be the funniest pieces I've ever read, until I read the chapter about the wedding reception at one of Steve Hunter's golf courses.”

Is anything sacred in *Behind the #\$\$%\*& Green*? Probably not, Simpson admits.

“I was kind of an equal opportunity attacker,” he says, when asked about the broad spectrum of subject matter covered in the novel. “It's a profession that requires a well-developed sense of humor. That was the whole intent behind the book — to make folks in the industry laugh and wake up those outside the industry who think it's the most wonderful job in world. Certainly in some respects it is, but there are negative aspects that just make it a little short of heaven.”

*Behind the #\$\$%\*& Green* (\$19.95) is available either in the stacks or by special order at most major bricks-and-mortar bookstore chains or online at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or Barnes and Noble ([www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)).

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