

As faithful readers and golf history buffs probably know, the original *Golfdom* was launched in 1927 by a pair of Chicago brothers named Herb and Joe Graffis. For nearly 50 years, the old *Golfdom* was the leading source of innovative business information for greenkeepers, club managers and golf professionals alike.

More importantly, for our purposes, the Graffis boys used their magazine as a bully pulpit to improve the lot of greenkeepers. Herb, in particular, lobbied for better education and organization in the fledgling profession. He's even credited with pushing for the use of the title, "greens superintendent," as a better indicator of the level of skill needed for the position.

Eventually, the visionary brothers grew old and sold the magazine. Predictably, without the guidance from its fathers, it lost its "edge" and voice, and died a largely unlamented death in the late 1970s. When we launched this thing in 1999, we gulped hard and "borrowed" the title of the legendary old journal. That worked out OK, so now I'm once again going to invoke a name from our past to, I hope, accomplish something positive for the future.

I hereby announce the creation of a new award, The Graffie, to be presented to those members of the mainstream golf media and establishment who "get it." In other words, we're going to regularly pay tribute to writers, players, association types and other influencers who seem to understand the realities of golf course maintenance and are willing to be credible messengers for the cause.

Although retroactive Graffies should certainly be presented to favorites including Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson, Jim Nantz and David Feherty, I'm going to award the inaugural honor to David Owen of *Golf Digest*.

His piece in the April issue ("Let's go retro — bring back shaggy greens") is simply the most accurate, sympathetic and well-constructed article about green speed to ever appear in a sticks-and-balls publication. If you haven't already seen it, go find it, read it and put a copy on every bulletin board and in every locker in your facility immediately. Just a

Now Introducing: The Graffie Awards

BY PAT JONES



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few quotations to illustrate the magnitude of this public-relations slam dunk:

- "Slow greens require as much putting skill as fast greens do — maybe more."
- "Dialing back the putting speed on almost all golf courses would be good for the game."
- "Like almost all the world's ills, greens that are too fast for their own good can be blamed on TV: Announcers obsess about putting speed, so you and I obsess about it, too."

Johnny Miller, are you listening?

So, Mr. Owen, it's an honor and a pleasure to make you our first Graffie recipient. That, however, begs the question of what the actual award should entail. I'm thinking we'll get an old cup cutter, spray paint it gold, do the proper engraving and ship it off to the winner. It would, at very least, be a nice conversation piece in the winner's cubicle. "What's that?" a visitor to his office would ask. "Why that's the coveted Golden Cup Cutter, of course," our hero would answer.

(By the way, I'm also considering starting an Anti-Graffie for those who consistently demonstrate that they don't "get it." Johnny Grainhead is an obvious choice, as would be noted *Poa*-hater and club slammer Tiger Woods. Instead of the Golden Cup Cutter, they would receive a bag of fertilizer — natural bovine fertilizer, if you catch my drift. But I digress ...)

I hope you'll join me in congratulating David Owen and thanking him for using his bully pulpit the way Herb did half a century ago. He can be reached at david.owen@earthlink.net if you'd like to share your digital congratulations with him. He may appreciate your kind words even more than the stupid yellow cup cutter he keeps stubbing his toe on.

Pat Jones is the publisher of Golfdom. He can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com.