

**T**his was an unusual 4<sup>th</sup> of July for me. No fireworks, not even a sparkler. My grill remained dormant. I didn't even get a typical 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend sunburn.

You could say it was a 4<sup>th</sup> without a bang or a boom — but it was definitely not a bust.

The reason for the change of pace this year was because the good folks at John Deere invited me to attend the John Deere Classic played in Moline, Ill., at TPC Deere Run. My time typically spent burning burgers was instead spent roaming the fairways of Deere Run, watching golf, conducting interviews and discussing this business we all love.

It was my second time at Deere Run, the first time coming some 10 years ago. It was good to return and see the course looking as great as ever. (A nice touch by superintendent Paul Grogan — every piece of equipment was adorned with a U.S. flag, a happy reminder of the holiday.)

I'm writing this column only a few hours before the magazine goes to press. I thought I'd share with you some of the highlights of this trip that included a few dozen superintendents, a few of golf's big influencers and about a dozen lost golf balls. Here are the highlights:

■ **A town hall discussion** with Rhett Evans (CEO, GCSAA); Ken Cousineau (CEO, Canadian Golf Superintendents Association); Jim Singerling (CEO, Club Managers Association of America) and Gregg Breningmeyer (global director of sales and marketing for John Deere Golf) took place at John Deere headquarters. John Kaminski, Ph.D., served as the moderator. The topics covered included discussions on the state of the industry, the effect of regional turf shows on the Golf Industry Show, and what assistant superintendents who feel like they're stalled out in their careers should do. "Until we learn how to grow jobs, we're in for a long haul," Evans said. "You look at the assistant superintendents... there are a lot of them saying, 'Where do I go from here?' There's not a lot of movement. We're looking at opportunities for our assistants right now." Look for more on this discussion in an upcoming "Chip Shots" e-newsletter.

## A 4<sup>th</sup> of July Without a Bang

BY SETH JONES



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■ **Driving TPC Deere Run with Grogan.** I'd interviewed Paul over the phone for a story before, so it was nice to meet him in person. Grogan told me he rarely did any interviews until these last few years... and now he can't keep track of how many he's done. It seems to me that the popularity of the superintendent as a source for information from the mainstream media has really exploded recently.

■ **GolfdomTV interviews with Breningmeyer** as well as Deb Amirault, the current CGSA president and the first woman to be elected president of, well, just about any of golf's major organizations (can you name a woman who has been president of the GCSAA or the PGA of America? Me neither.) Both interviews can be viewed right now at [www.golfdom.com](http://www.golfdom.com).

■ **The 18th green hospitality tent.** Need I say more?

■ **Meeting supers from as far and wide** as Scotland to the desert Southwest.

■ **Golf at Davenport CC.** Sure, I hit most of my drives OB (at least I was consistent) but I had fabulous playing partners and a scenic golf course. After the round was over I was in the clubhouse and I stopped to admire the trophy case. Staring back at me was a copy of *Golfdom* magazine from June 1936 with Davenport CC on the cover. It was a nice reminder that regardless of the way I played, what we're doing here at this magazine — being out there covering the industry — still matters to courses and superintendents around the country.

So thanks to John Deere for an insightful and interesting Independence Day. Not only did you keep me from blowing my hand off, you also helped me keep my finger on the pulse of the industry.

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