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Golfdom

FEBRUARY 2002 • VOLUME 58 • NO. 2

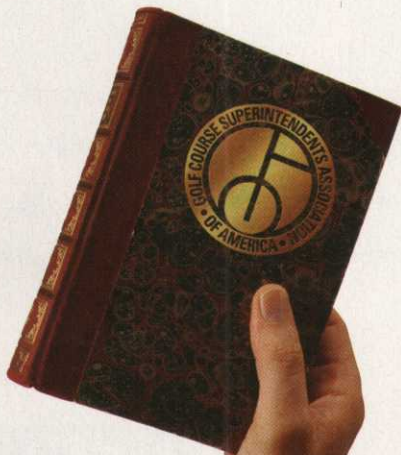
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The Book on Chapters

Meeting attendance and volunteerism continue to pose problems, but association leaders are discovering ways to combat them.

By Larry Aylward



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Busting the Myths Surrounding The First Tee

Misconceptions about about the program, what it does and what it plans for the future.

By Joe O'Brien



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cover story

BY LARRY AYLWARD

Many industry families have sprouted several generations of superintendents, some spanning four and five generations.

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Arizona photographer Dean Stevenson rounded up the Pock clan (front, from left: Jay holding Cody, Mason and Ernie; back, Mike) for this family portrait.

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Two classically designed golf courses take different approaches to bunker restorations – and both vastly improved their layouts.

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Maximum Control

Slow-release products can enhance your turf maintenance practices — if you know how to use them.

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.



New Column

In this issue, *Golfdom* debuts "It's Academic," a new turfgrass column written by leading professors. Please join us in welcoming Karl Danneberger from The Ohio State University, who authors the debut column on page 66.

Events

SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

FEBRUARY

14 Irrigation Association Seminar: Understanding Pumps, Controls & Wells
Cincinnati
Contact 703-536-7080

15 Irrigation Association Seminar: Understanding Pumps, Controls & Wells
Columbus, Ohio
Contact 703-536-7080

21-22 Irrigation Association Seminar: Certified Irrigation Contractor Training
Columbus, Ohio
Contact 703-536-7080

25 Oregon GCSA and Western Washington GCSA Joint Meeting
Longview, Wash.
Contact 800-738-1617

26 GCSAA Seminar: Golf Course Safety, Security and Risk Management
Arlington, Texas
Contact 800-472-7878

26 GCSAA Seminar: Spray Technicians
Alpharetta, Ga.
Contact 706-742-2651

26-28 The Ohio State University Golf Course Maintenance Short Course
Columbus, Ohio
Contact 614-292-4230

MARCH

2-5 53rd Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show
Quebec City, Quebec
Contact 905-602-8873

4 GCSAA Seminar: Maximizing Turfgrass Disease Control
Sioux Falls, S.D.
Contact 800-472-7878

4 GCSAA Seminar: Shaded Greens – Turf, Trees and Politics
Providence, R.I.
Contact 800-472-7878

4-5 GCSAA Seminar: Physical Problems of Turfgrass Soils: Identification and Correction
Birmingham, Ala.
Contact 800-472-7878

4 GCSAA Seminar: Pump Station Technologies and Troubleshooting
Gaylord, Mich.
Contact 800-472-7878

5-7 New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show
Providence, R.I.
Contact 401-848-0004

5 GCSAA Seminar: Irrigation Water Quality
Gaylord, Mich.
Contact 800-472-7878

6 GCSAA Seminar: Microbiology of Soils
Phoenix
Contact 480-598-3429

11 GCSAA Seminar: Management Strategies for the Turfgrass System
Robinsonville, Miss.
Contact 800-472-7878

12 GCSAA Seminar: Turfgrass Ecology
King of Prussia, Pa.
Contact 800-472-7878

12 GCSAA Seminar: Fundamentals of Turfgrass Management I
Johnstown, Pa.
Contact 800-472-7878

14 GCSAA Seminar: The Magic of Greenskeeping
Hudson, Ohio
Contact 800-472-7878

APRIL

10 GCSAA Seminar: Management Strategies for the Turfgrass System
Palm Desert, Calif.
Contact 800-472-7878

Let us know about your events. Send information to Frank Andorka at 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, 44130. Fax information to 440-891-2675 or e-mail to fandorka@advanstar.com.

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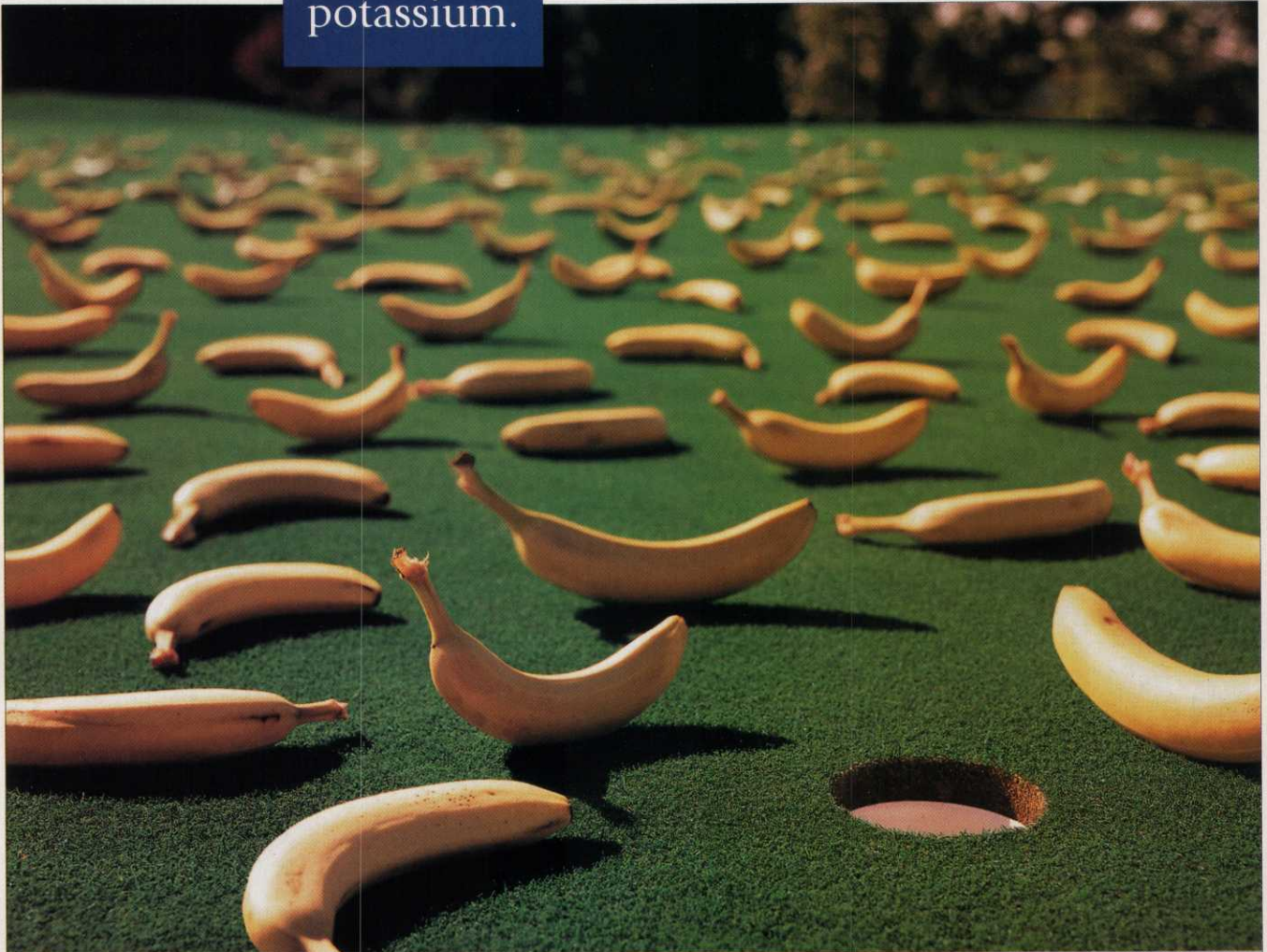


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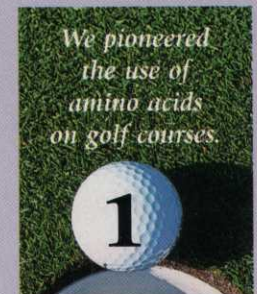
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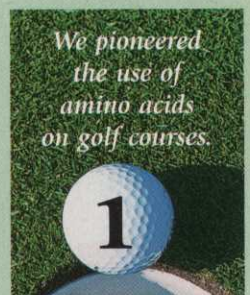
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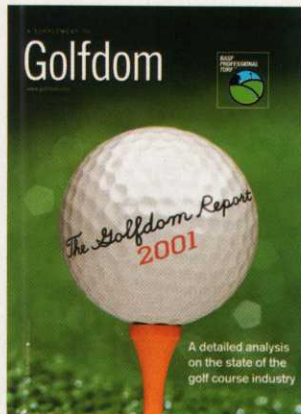
■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

Golfdom Report Packs Punch

I thought you touched the bases very well in The Golfdom Report (December). I know my club has felt the economic pinch, as we are operating in 2002 on 2001's budget. The employees received a 3 percent payroll increase, which for us is low. I guess we'll find out if I'm a good superintendent, working to do more with less.

Secondly, I also agree strongly with the need for affordable golf. Our industry is forgetting what made the golf boom of the 1990s so popular. Joe Homeowner, after he left work, loved to go out and play twilight rates at his local course and had a good time doing it. He would also play more on weekends to play his local course. Unfortunately, those affordable courses are now rare.

Something eventually will have to give, with either courses lowering prices (which I doubt) or more



and more golfers becoming disenfranchised with high fees and playing less or not at all. When that happens, you will see courses disappear because they can't afford to pay the electric bill. We are going to lose a generation of golfers if the industry does not find a way to give them affordable golf.

The economy will eventually come out of this, as it always does. Nevertheless, golf may find itself in a hole that it can't crawl out of by becoming an elitist sport, played by only the rich with equip-

ment that only the rich can afford.

I would love to join the drive for more affordable golf. Signature courses look great and shine nicely in publications, but can the average golfer really afford them? Can they actually play them without getting clobbered by the course?

Give Joe Golfer a course with a \$35 weekday and \$42 weekend rate and make it playable.

You'll do just fine.

Charlie Fultz
Superintendent
CC of Culpeper
Culpeper, Va.

Dye'd-in-the-Wool Fan

I enjoyed Larry Aylward's December commentary on Pete Dye (Pin High, December). I spent a little time with Pete when I worked at the USGA Green Section from 1978 to 1984. He is all you say he is.

My first experience was to meet with him at the Country Club of Austin (before it had opened). We walked that course together. He asked my opinion on various things and gave his own to me.

We had lunch in the middle of this turf advisory visit. Then I invited him to speak on golf course design at two of the USGA regional conferences, which he did. He was very interesting and entertaining.

I'm only sorry I didn't tape the talks he gave.

Doug Hawes
Independent Turf Consultant
Plano, Texas

Joel's Too Modest

After reading Joel Jackson's editorial, "2001: A Good Time to Get Political" (Shades of Green, December), I quickly realized that Jackson left out one important component from the equation. He neglected to mention his efforts to

accomplish the positive things about which he wrote.

As the current past president of the Florida GCSA, I was part of the group that hired Jackson as the director of communications for the association. I can tell you firsthand: Jackson has been instrumental in our ability as superintendents to educate and influence the powers-that-be of our position on a number of critical items.

As a former superintendent, Jackson understands the issues we face. His passion and drive in his current role have allowed him to rally the troops to attend meetings, write letters and make phone calls, just as he urged others to do in his column. Equally important is the fact that when all else fails, Jackson dedicates his time to represent us as a group.

This is not meant to take away from the valiant efforts of the many superintendents who rose to the occasion and dedicated their time and energy to make a difference in our industry. Jackson would be the first to point out that it's the "end-user" that will make regulators and politicians take notice.

In addition to pointing out Jackson's modesty, I also wanted to remind other association leaders how valuable a person like Jackson can be to other local, state or regional associations.

Darren J. Davis
Superintendent
Olde Florida GC
Naples, Fla.

Feel like going postal? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.

Winning the Budget Battle

Thank you immensely for Dave Wilber's article (Dave's World, November). You really helped me hit it home to the board at my club.

Everyone is concerned because the clubhouse is \$150,000 over budget. Guess who they asked to save some money? Right — the grounds department.

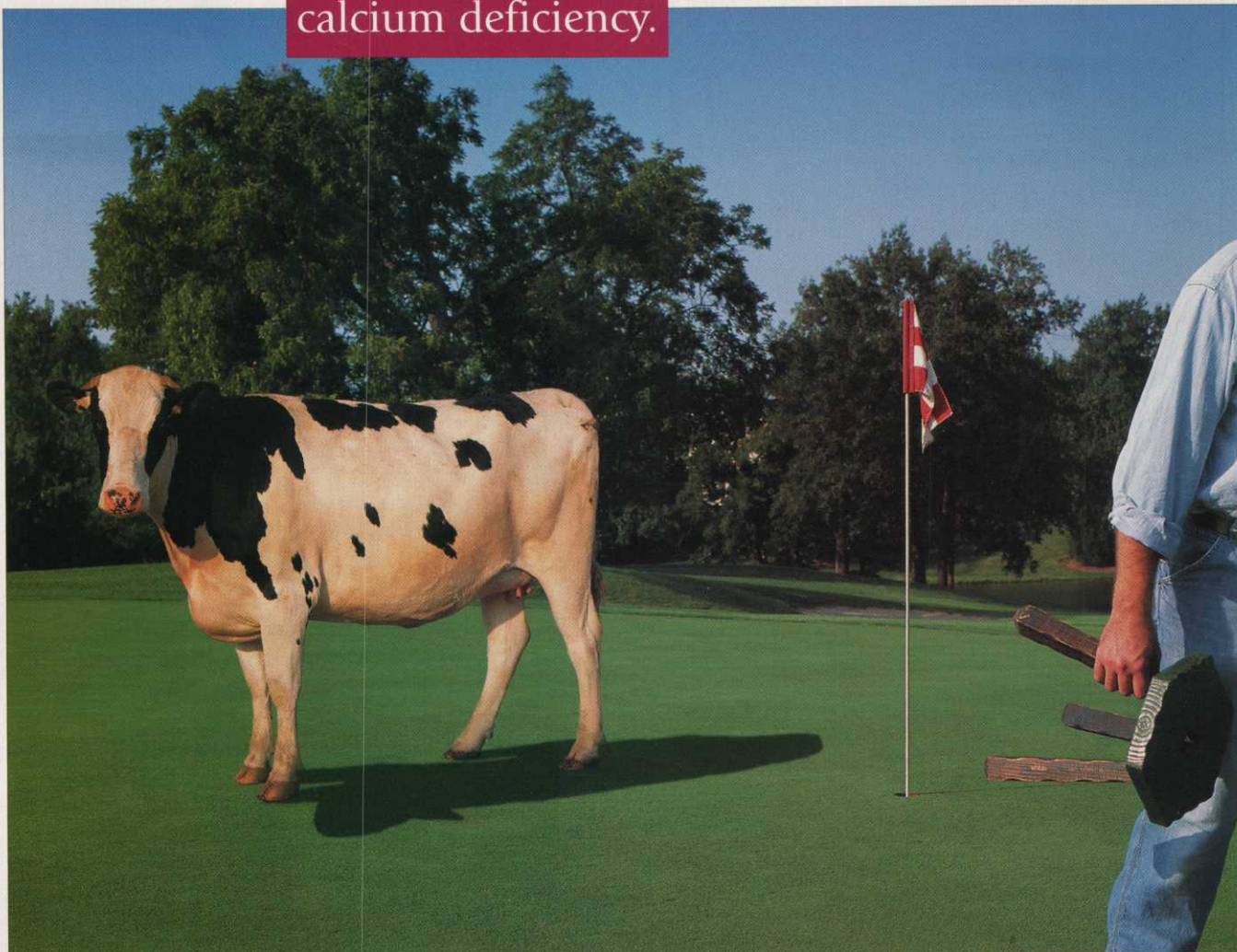
Fortunately, I was astute enough that when the finance committee came to the greens committee meeting to see where we could "trim some fat" out of an already lean budget, I was prepared for them. I gave them a list of things we could do (or not do) to trim the budget down. After they agreed to the

steps I proposed, I handed them a sheet to sign, which stated that any inadequacies on the course resulted from their request to me that I trim my budget. They never signed the sheet.

In the midst of developing the budget for 2002, the chicken littles on the finance committee told us that we were going into an economic downturn and we needed to spend less money. I told them they needed to spend more money to retain our membership and attract new members as well.

Louis Bettencourt
Superintendent
Rolling Road GC
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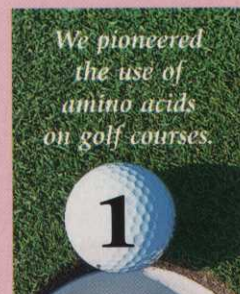
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With Valentine's Day just ahead — or just behind depending on the vagaries of the U.S. mail these days — I thought I'd drop a little love note to the golf course industry. How do I love thee? Let me count the ways:

♥ I love the way superintendents always seem relaxed and laid back even though they have stressful jobs that demand a fierce, anal-retentive desire to achieve an often unachievable level of perfection.

♥ I love the game of golf itself, but not for some mystical, highfallutin' "Golf-In-The-Kingdom"-ish reason. For me, golf rules all other games because you can drink, smoke, gamble and even heed nature's call behind a tree (sorry ladies) while meandering around a superbly crafted landscape. What's not to love about that?

♥ I love the fact that this \$8.4 billion business seems more like a small family than a huge marketplace.

♥ I love poking around in maintenance facilities and asking dumb questions ("What the hell is this thing?"). I'm amazed at how patient you are with non-turfheads like me. I would have smacked me upside the head years ago.

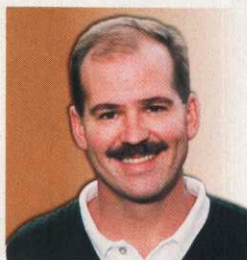
♥ I love the fact that we received a bunch of letters from spouses and children of superintendents after we ran a story on balancing careers and families. It reaffirms that this is a special job that requires the family to work as a team to survive.

♥ I love that there are still young people coming into the industry with talent, high hopes and the humility to realize that they don't know it all. Despite rumors to the contrary, the concept of apprenticeship and paying your dues is alive and well — at least among the younger folks who will eventually be truly successful in the business.

♥ I love driving past my local Cleveland Metroparks muni course on the way to work and seeing four African-American elementary school kids waiting on the tee, drivers in hand, with big smiles on their faces and visions of Tiger dancing in their heads.

How Do I Love Thee, Industry?

BY PAT JONES



IN HONOR OF
VALENTINE'S DAY,
HERE'S A LITTLE
LOVE NOTE TO THE
INDUSTRY

♥ I love it when I meet somebody for the first time and I tell them I publish a magazine for the people who maintain and manage the most beautiful and coolest playing fields in the world. I can't tell you how many millionaire executive types have said that they would trade me jobs in a heartbeat.

♥ I love it when I occasionally come across a Tour pro, like Ben Crenshaw, Pete Jacobsen or Mark McCumber, who really gets what you do. Perhaps the only upside of the celebrity-player design craze is that superstars like these are increasingly appreciative of the crucial role superintendents play in the success of their creations.

♥ I love the constant innovation of superintendents and the suppliers who serve them. Isn't it both astounding and amusing how many techniques and gadgets they've created to facilitate the damnably simple idea of propelling a small white ball into a tiny hole in the distance? Old Tom is almost certainly laughing his arse off in his Scottish grave — but I bet he's jealous, too.

♥ I love the earlier-than-usual scheduling of the GCSAA Show this year. Why? Because for the first time in years, I'll be able to give my beautiful wife candy and flowers in person this Valentine's Day.

♥ I love standing on the first tee of a course I've never played. It always makes me feel like a kid who's about to unwrap the biggest present under the Christmas tree.

♥ Last, but not least, I love the fact that I get paid to do something I love. I hope you do, too.

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