

Pennsylvania or Ohio because the relationship between the industry and the university isn't on the same level.

"We've made it work," he says. "My program benefitted from the GCSAA and the Environmental Institute for Golf."

How it operates

Rutgers is somewhat unique because its turfgrass program is built around a breeding program, which started in 1964. Revenue generated from seed — which is licensed to companies because the university doesn't sell directly to superintendents — helps fund the program and research. Additionally, the university receives grants steadily from different sources, Clarke says. Those funds support faculty teaching, extension work and research.



“We’d be in a lot of trouble if we depended solely on state funds. You have to fund your research and beat the bushes for money. I’m not turning down anything right now.” — PETER LANDSCHOOT

"We picked up more technical support that was cut a couple years ago that has to be picked up with a grant," he says. "That's why research grants are important."

The number of undergrads in the Rutgers program has declined for a number of years because of the economic recession and how that's impacted the golf industry.

"But we still have a good number of students and are teaching the same number of classes," Clarke says.

Universities are making a big transition to a more tuition-based business model, Landschoot says, adding that tuition funds professor salaries.

"A lot of universities are phasing out programs that aren't strong, but we're not in that boat," he says. "Our program is very strong. We're a leader."

"Our enrollment has leveled off because of the economy, but the numbers are sustainable," he adds. "That's expected. There hasn't been a sharp decline in numbers. The turfgrass program is one of the stronger programs in the school, and the online program is doing great because fewer people want to come to campus to earn a degree."

Continued on page 22

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Reduced Funding

Dr. Wong Gets the Girl

Leaving UC Riverside behind and accepting a job with Bayer in Washington, D.C., Frank Wong gets to be with his bride. BY SETH JONES

Editor's note: *This story originally ran as Golfdom's newsletter "Chip Shots." Visit www.golfdom.com to sign up for Golfdom's newsletters.*

It was an easy decision, Frank Wong, Ph.D., laughs, because it involved a woman.

"It was a no-brainer," he giggles. "You get the job that you wanted, in the place that you wanted, and you get the girl too. It's an absolute slam-dunk."

Wong, who previously was a specialist of plant pathology at the University of California-Riverside, accepted a job that moves him across the country to Washington, D.C. He's now a technical service specialist for Bayer's Environmental

Health division. Most important to him, he's closer to his wife of two years, Dr. Caroline Ridley, whom he married in October of 2009. Ridley moved to D.C. after she was awarded a fellowship to work as a scientist for the EPA.

For Bayer, Wong will be doing a lot of what he was already doing as an extension specialist at Riverside — meeting with superintendents and growers and discussing what's best for their turf and crops.

"(Bayer) would like me to focus on providing support for the industry," Wong says. "From D.C. to Boston to Chicago. Where disease pressure on cool season is the

Continued from page 21

But Landschoot says the PSU turfgrass program is still stressed. It's looking at efficiencies. Additionally, when someone retires or leaves, those positions aren't being replaced.

"All public institutions are stressed," Landschoot says. "I'm thankful of industry support. All turfgrass students who graduated last year got jobs, so I think students will still come into the program. We need to keep our relationships in the industry strong so we can help students get jobs."

Follow the money

The result of states' funding reductions is putting more pressure on manufacturers and individual golf facilities (owners, superintendents, etc.) to support turfgrass research financially. The gradual erosion of support from states is shifting responsibility to researchers, who have to find support from other sources.

"It's not easy," Clarke says, adding that he's relying more on local associations such as the New Jersey Turfgrass Foundation, the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation and the New Jersey GCSA, and less on national associations such as the GCSAA and USGA.

The PSU research facility, which has a \$100,000 mainte-

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Frank Wong, Ph.D., left UC Riverside earlier this year in order to be closer to his wife of two years, Caroline Ridley, Ph.D. Wong is now a technical service specialist for Bayer Environmental Health.

highest — lot of brown patch, lot of dollar spot. It all comes down to enhancing customer service and support. Just talking to sales guys, supers, letting them know the best fit for the Bayer product line.”

If Wong has any regrets, it's that he left behind an area that he feels lacks the support it needs.

UC Riverside had halted operations of its turf diagnostics lab as a result of, among other things, insufficient funding.

“I don't want to make it seem like I was running away from a problem at the university, but, man... when your primary job is to do science and education, and you find yourself 90 percent of the time worrying about budgets, manpower issues, and how to

make sure you have enough paper towels in the lab? It really distracts away from the stuff you want to do,” Wong says.

And then there's the lovely Dr. Ridley. Once this job at Bayer became available, Wong hit the door pretty quickly. But that's what happens when personal lives are involved.

It's obvious that Dr. Wong is a man in love — with a new job, a new city, and most of all with being reunited with his wife. It's almost like the couple gets a second honeymoon.

But how will things go when the two are once again under the same roof?

“Man, I'm still just trying to figure out why she married me in the first place,” Wong laughs.

Details, Frank. You got the girl.

nance budget in addition to salaries, is funded by an endowment from the sale of the Penncross varieties of turfgrass in addition to the royalties from Tee-2-Green sales of PSU varieties. Additional funding comes from Penn State turfgrass council, conferences and industry golf tournaments. There's also grant funding from chemical, seed and fertilizer companies to test products.

“We'd be in a lot of trouble if we depended solely on state funds,” Landschoot says. “You have to fund your research and beat the bushes for money. I'm not turning down anything right now.”

The good news is the economy is starting to turn around, and companies aren't in so much of a holding pattern or downsizing, Landschoot says. Companies want to explore new products.

In Wong's case, other sources of funding were more difficult to come by.

“The golf industry, as a whole, isn't doing well, so how am I supposed to squeeze superintendents for more money when their budgets are being cut? And the chemical companies are fantastic. Without them, my program wouldn't have started. But there's only so much they can contribute, and they're contributing a lot. We need more support from others in the industry.” ■

Walsh is a contributing editor for Golfdom.

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GOLF COLLEGE

MEMORIES

TURF SCHOOL
STUDY

RYAN BALDWIN, CGCS

COURSE: Highland Golf & Country Club, Indianapolis

SCHOOL: Purdue University **DEGREE, YEAR:** B.S., Agronomy with emphasis in Turf Science, 1996

Ryan Baldwin didn't have much of a choice when it came to colleges, but he's glad it worked out that way.

"My mother is an extension agent with Purdue," Baldwin says. "I was destined to attend Purdue from day one."

Baldwin arrived at Purdue planning on majoring in biology, but that quickly changed. With a large student body and so many majoring in biology, he felt like a number more than a student. So he chose to switch over to agronomy.

"There were benefits going into agronomy — there was a lot of contact with fellow students and faculty," Baldwin says. "The relationships I was able to build at such a large college, but small field, was invaluable. It may have been even more important to me than the agronomy."

Because of his close proximity to the school, and his passion for it, Baldwin has remained heavily involved with Purdue. He says there is a connection between everyone in the "Purdue family," even with alumni who attended the university in different decades.

"I remember the first time I met Clark Throssell — he was my adviser — I called him 'Dr. Throssell,'" Baldwin recalls. "He stopped me and said, 'No, I'm Clark.' That's just an example of how down-to-earth everyone was there." ■

GOLFDOM READERS REFLECT ON A FEW OF THE GREAT TURF PROGRAMS IN THE NATION.

BY SETH JONES AND BETH GERACI

All superintendents are passionate about growing grass. And most are just as passionate about their turf schools. ▶

Whether it's wearing team colors to the GCSAA Golf Tournament or chiding a rival school alumnus about the necessity of a "The" in his school's name, superintendents are bragging about their turf schools nearly every day.

▶ With a new college year underway, *Golfdom* asked turf school alumni why their alma maters are so dear to them. Here's what they said.

JOSH LEWIS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

COURSE: Pasatiempo Golf Club, Santa Cruz, Calif. **SCHOOL:** Oregon State University **DEGREE, YEAR:** B.S., Horticulture with Turfgrass Management option, 2010

“One thing about being a small program is, it’s very tight-knit,” says proud Beaver Josh Lewis, who says he keeps in touch with his classmates as well as other Oregon State alumni. “Whether it’s right or not, with us being so small, it gives us

a feeling of ‘us against the world.’”

Lewis attended Oregon State when then-director Tom Cook, Ph.D., retired and current director Rob Golembiewski, Ph.D., took over. Lewis says that both professors encouraged his development as a turf manager.

One of Lewis’ favorite classes was what he called “a case study on steroids.” The class was divided into four different groups, and each group was assigned a part of a golf course. Their assignment was to get their particular piece of course up to U.S. Open conditions in 10 weeks.

“(Golembiewski) turned us loose. We had to come up with our own fertilizer plan and then push it,” Lewis re-



calls. “If we killed it, we killed it. It was all up to us.”

So how did Lewis’ green turn out? “We set the green speed record,” he laughs. ■

KRIS “KD” DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT

COURSE: Southern Hills Country Club, Tulsa, Okla. **SCHOOL:** The Ohio State University **DEGREE, YEAR:** B.S., Turfgrass Science, minor in Plant Pathology, 1999

At The Ohio State University, “football is the religion; basketball plays a close second.” So says Southern Hills Country Club superintendent KD Davis, who somehow managed to carve a path in turfgrass among the Ohio State sports hoopla.

When Davis attended OSU, it was the nation’s largest university. He knew if he was to control his future, he had to be an aggressive student. “Whether it was getting the right classes or fighting to get time with advisers and teachers, you were on your own, so to speak,” Davis explains.

But he wasn’t a bookworm, and when he recalls

his time as a Buckeye, Davis can’t help but smile.

“Whether it was the wealth of knowledge that was all around me to be soaked up or a few beers, it was definitely a great time in my life,” says Davis, who keeps in close contact with his college friends. Although he first lived on campus, he “got out of the dorms as fast as possible and never lived more than a 2-minute walk from campus. That is definitely where the fun was.”

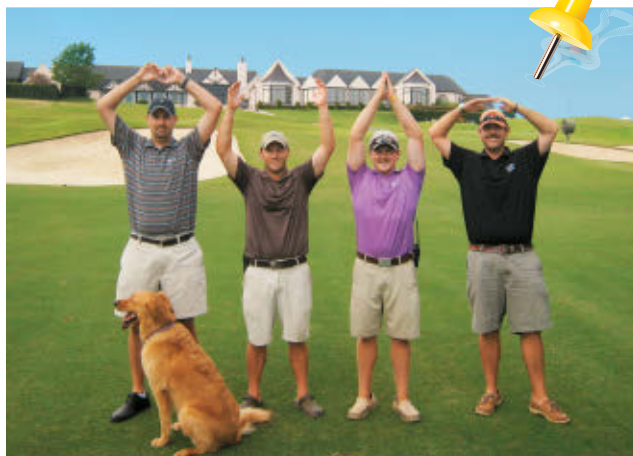
“Dr. D.” Karl Danneberger and Dr. Michael Boehm influenced Davis most in class. The real life scenarios Danneberger presented taught him to become well informed before jumping to conclusions, while Boehm, a military veteran, taught him discipline.

Davis, 36, wanted to be a superintendent ever since he was 13, when he mowed yards just to pay for his membership at a local course. When Davis was 15, the course’s superintendent observed Davis was at the club more often than some of his crew. So he hired Davis part-time and the youngster played golf every day when his shift was over. That winter, he began exploring turf schools.

Davis’ curiosity and tenacity set the tone for his college and professional careers. Driven and disciplined, he continues to network with other OSU alums, which has propelled his success all the more.

Today, he brings his dog to the office, works outdoors and is living his dream. “The cons are the summer hours,” he says. “The pros are everything else.” ■

The Ohio State grad KD Davis (left) and three of his friends spell out “Ohio”.



PHOTOS COURTESY: KRIS “KD” DAVIS; JOSH LEWIS (TOP); ILLUSTRATION BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

Continued on page 26

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Continued from page 25

MARK KUHNS, CGCS

COURSE: Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N.J. **SCHOOL:** Penn State University
DEGREE, YEAR: B.S., Agricultural Science, 1977

Mark Kuhns still remembers the exact name of the class — Ag Engineering 13. The course focused on irrigation and design.

“It’s phenomenal how much that course has helped me today,” Kuhns says. “We had to design the pump, decide on pipe sizes, everything. And it had to be efficient — the most minimal pump for the site.”

Kuhns says that the Penn State program has gone more turf-centric since he left. When he was at school, he had to take more agricultural courses, which, in hindsight, also paid off.

“Agricultural engineering, horticulture, agricultural economics, accounting — those courses prepared me to look at the big picture,” Kuhns says. “One class that stood out was my speech course. I had a great instructor who brought us out of our shells. He taught us how to walk and how to talk. Major Brigham — shows you how good the class was if I still remember his name.”

To this day Kuhns is one of the biggest supporters of Penn State’s turf program, often speaking at PSU functions and also recruiting future superintendents from the program.

“I thank Penn State

every day of my life,” Kuhns says. “That’s why I’m crazy (about the university.) It is a land grant institution and it did exactly what it was designed to do — it took a country boy and it turned him around.” ■



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TROY LOONEY, SUPERINTENDENT

COURSE: The Emerald Golf Course, Saint Johns, Mich. **SCHOOL:** Michigan State University **DEGREE, YEAR:** B.S., Crop and Soil Sciences and turfgrass curriculum, 2007

Troy Looney, 29, wanted to pursue a career in marketing or psychology. But while a junior at Michigan State, he changed course, turning to a degree in turf.

He's glad he did, despite his dislike of ball marks.

"The MSU community as a whole is one I respect and admire and have incredible memories of," he says. "I was able to meet a wide variety of professors and students, all of whom had incredible knowledge and perspectives."

So many people at MSU left a lasting impression on Looney, he can't name them all. But two professors have stayed at the fore of his mind — James Crum, Ph.D. and John "Trey" Rogers, Ph.D., both of whom took time outside of class to answer Looney's questions.

"I found their classes to be intriguing and beneficial," Looney says. "More importantly, their guidance greatly improved my professionalism and enhanced my knowledge on how to succeed in the turfgrass profession."

Looney once showed his school spirit by helping build an MSU Homecoming float. It must have turned out pretty good, because the proud Spartan saw it on the front page of the newspaper the next day — a memory he'll always cherish. ■

PHOTOS COURTESY: MARK KUHN (OPPOSITE); TROY LOONEY; USGA



TY MCCLELLAN, USGA AGRONOMIST, MID-CONTINENT REGION

SCHOOL: Kansas State University **DEGREE, YEAR:** B.S., Golf Course Management, College of Agriculture, 2001

When Ty McClellan arrived at Kansas State's campus in Manhattan, Kan., he was an architecture major. That lasted about a week.

"It was a combination of finding out that architecture wasn't what I wanted to do, and that K-State was coming out with this new golf management program in the fall of '98," McClellan remembers. "I had a farming background, so I decided to give it a try."

McClellan is happy he rolled the dice on the new program. He says it's one of the most innovative programs in the nation.

"You get your golf course work, then three minors: hotel and restaurant management, communications and business administration," McClellan explains. "The degree is designed to give you a well-rounded education as a superintendent, but also the credentials to go on to be a general manager, if you choose to do so."

After graduating from K-State, he went on to the University of Nebraska where he earned an M.S. in horticulture specializing in turfgrass. He later became GCSAA's first chapter liaison representative before joining the USGA. The well-rounded program at K-State was a key to his success, he says.

"Dr. Jack Fry taught one of my favorite classes — Golf Course Operations," McClellan recalls. "It was an all-inclusive look at golf course management. It blended financial decisions and turf science. It really helped us wrap our minds around the whole business of a golf course." ■



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Something New at *Newport*

BY ANTHONY PIOPPi



NEWPORT COUNTRY CLUB IS A PLACE where if time has not altogether stopped, it sure seems to progress at a much slower pace than the crazy world around it.

From the grandeur of the famous clubhouse to unirrigated fairways where the golden turf shines in the Rhode Island summer sun, Newport appears to have changed little since A.W. Tillinghast created the current layout in 1923.

Unbeknownst to most of the

golf world, though, something did change at the course in May of this year. Bob Reynolds, who had worked at the club for 34 years — 30 of them as superintendent — was gone.

Reynolds was only the third person to hold the position of superintendent at the club in the last 87 years.

Taking Reynolds' place is his longtime assistant, Chris Coen, a Newport native and resident.

Reynolds, originally from Jamestown, R.I., and his wife, Beth, will retire to Florida, where they have a home. Because most Newport members would not have been back at the club for Reynolds' last day, they feted him in the summer of 2010, presenting him and Beth with an Alaskan cruise.

As superintendent, Reynolds prepared the Newport course for major tournaments. Between 1981, Reynolds' inaugural year as super-

After 34 years, Bob Reynolds leaves this classic Rhode Island course to his former assistant.



intendent, and 1990, there was the *Golf Digest* Commemorative Pro-Am, which drew former PGA Tour players to the course in what was a precursor to the Champions Tour; the 1995 United States Amateur, where Tiger Woods won the second of his three consecutive U.S. Amateur titles; and the 2006 U.S. Women's Open, where Annika Sorenstam nabbed her third Open and last major title in an 18-hole playoff Reynolds will never forget.

A 10-cent bet

It was not divine intervention or even dumb luck that brought Reynolds to one of the most hallowed courses in the United States. It was 10 cents.

After graduating from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in resource management, Reynolds went looking for a full-time job in the golf course maintenance field. He had spent the two previous summers working at Millbrook (N.Y.) Golf and Tennis Club. At the time of graduation, he was employed at a farm in Jamestown, selling flowers at a greenhouse and vegetables from a roadside stand.

Then two offers in the golf industry came Reynolds' way: Point Judith Country Club offered him \$2.90 an hour, while Newport offered him \$3 an hour. Reynolds went for Newport and never looked back.

"It was a great place to work. I was supported by everyone I knew — friends, peers, the members and the board," Reynolds said.

The club's firm, fast fairways and slick greens today are vastly better than those that greeted Reynolds when he arrived at the club in 1977. Back then, the golf season lasted only three months.

"We'd put the shutters on the clubhouse the day after Labor Day and wouldn't open until Memorial Day," Reynolds recounted.

When Reynolds took over as superintendent in 1981, the superintendent's office had no heat, the men's room was the bushes and "the greens were like lush carpets," mowed at about a quarter of an inch, Reynolds said. "You couldn't hit it across a green. You couldn't swing hard enough."

New maintenance regime

Shortly after Reynolds was named superintendent, he began making improvements.

"The first year I took over we aerated like crazy, lowered the height of cut and topdressed (the greens)," Reynolds said.

He punched holes three times a year the first few seasons in an aggressive attempt to reduce thatch.

At the same time, the executive board wanted to lengthen the course, so trees came down to make room for new tees. A black pine disease forced the removal of more trees, and long-forgotten vistas were reclaimed. A decades-long effort to restore NCC's links was underway.

Worst week ever

For nine years, the *Golf Digest* pro-am was a hit with Reynolds and others. For two days each summer, golf's greatest players teed it up, and Reynolds and his wife could mingle with legends such as Gary Player, Garner Dickinson, Dow Finsterwald, Lee Trevino and Chi-Chi Rodriguez.

Then there was the 2006 U.S. Women's Open. No matter how hard he tries, Reynolds will never forget that week. I was part of the crew, having volunteered to mow fairways.

The course had been in perfect condition just two weeks before, but it "was burned to a frazzle," for the event, Reynolds said — the result of a relentless heat wave and drought. Despite the scorching, the tournament was still a success.

"The worst week of my career," Reynolds said without an inkling of regret.

It began with 3.5 inches of rain on Sunday of tournament week. The downpour flooded holes 10 through 17, as well as the driving range. Bunkers became ponds and fairways lakes. Fire trucks and gasoline pumps were brought in to expedite the water flow off the course. For hundreds of hours, Reynolds' crew, volunteers and NCC members manned squeegees, soaking up the massive amounts of water.

The course was so wet that spectators were not allowed on the grounds for practice rounds and players were not allowed on the 17th and 18th holes until the tournament began. On Wednesday, another three-quarters of an inch of rain fell. The bunkers that had been pumped out and

Continued on page 30

Moving on

Continued from page 29

rebuilt, the fairways and putting surfaces that had finally drained off, were again disaster areas.

We worked feverishly through the day and well past sunset to have the course ready for play Thursday. But our frantic efforts were all in vain.

Fog rolled in overnight. Sunrise revealed a course shrouded in a gray haze so thick even the clubhouse was barely visible.

Finally, on Friday morning, the tournament began. For the next three days the course was packed as golfers continuously played off the first and 10th tees as long as there was light in an attempt to have the event finish on time. Attendance exceeded all expectations.

The days were long. Friday night's dinner, pizza and sodas, were delivered to the fairway mowing crew in the rough between the fifth and seventh holes. We congregated there for perhaps 10 minutes then resumed our assigned tasks. Many of us had a steering wheel in one hand and a slice of pizza in the other.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday were sunny and windy, and we couldn't meet our goal of finishing Sunday evening.

Congregated around the last green, we watched in disbelief as Annika Sorenstam's 22-footer for birdie missed its mark. After four rounds, Sorenstam and Pat Hurst were tied. That meant they had to play 18 more holes on Monday.

"The tournament that wouldn't begin became the tournament that wouldn't end," NCC president Barclay Douglas Jr. said then.

"It was absolutely insane," Reynolds said, shaking his head.

On Monday, in beautiful conditions, Sorenstam made quick work of Hurst, claiming the championship.

Time to move on

Reynolds' Newport Country Club memories don't all revolve around turf conditions. For him, the club was also home. Reynolds and his family lived in a house

so close to the golf course that anyone falling down the front stairs landed on the 13th tee.

He and Beth raised two children in that house. Reynolds' daughter Kathleen, 26, recently earned a nursing degree. Son Ryan, who worked on the crew and was an accomplished golfer, passed away unexpectedly in 2005 at age 22.

"It was lonely for the kids in the winter but in the summer you can't beat it," Reynolds said.

One of his favorite moments came in 1991 in the aftermath of Hurricane Bob, which had brought the angry ocean up and over Ocean Drive and onto the course.

"The kids were swimming in the bunkers on 4 as I tried to flush saltwater off the green with the irrigation system," he said with a large smile.

Reynolds first met his successor Coen through his children. For not only was Coen's girlfriend at the time working in the clubhouse, she also was babysitting for the Reynolds family. Coen filled in as babysitter when needed and soon found himself working summers on the golf course. Eventually he was offered a full-time position. That was 20 years ago.

After working at the club for 10 years, Coen was promoted to assistant superintendent. When Reynolds announced his retirement, Newport gave Coen a trial run in the top slot throughout 2010. For Coen, 2010 was a test, as he essentially made all the agronomic decisions. He passed.

"It's nice knowing my assistant is going to take over. I take a little pride in that," Reynolds said. "He knows the golf course as well as I do. He knows the idiosyncrasies. He knows what's going to happen in advance. He doesn't have to learn through trial and error."

Coen is looking forward to being in charge, and he's confident he is up to the task.

"Last year I took on a lot more responsibility. It was a lot," he said, but not too



"It was a great place to work.

I was supported by everyone I knew — friends, peers, the members and the board." — Bob Reynolds

much. "I know this place like the back of my hand."

Coen does not have an agronomic degree, although he did attend the University of Massachusetts Winter School program and always takes part in seminars at the New England Regional Turfgrass Show and Conference. The club wants him to continue his education. This year he went to his first GIS.

According to Coen, he's been attending class for the last 20 years with Reynolds as the teacher.

"I couldn't have asked for a better person to work for," he said.

Douglas surmised that the change would not be a monumental one.

"I see a lot of similarities between Chris and Bob," he said. "They both are the superintendent that will get in the ditch and get dirty."

Coen said his plan is to combine what he has learned from Reynolds with his own ideas. "Take everything he taught me and add my own little pizzazz," he said.

Last year that meant a new light and frequent topdressing program on greens, of which members approved.

The modifications Coen made are fine with Reynolds, too. After 30 years, the Newport Country Club is no longer his. In succinct New England style, Reynolds sums up his feelings.

"It's time to move on."

If Reynolds ever does come up North again, he will always be welcomed at Newport.

"The door is always open," Douglas said. "It's family." ■

Pioppi is a contributing editor to Golfdom.