

Golfdom

Summit for Superintendents

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My fellow golf maintenance professionals,

What a year it's been here at *Golfdom*. I thank you all for being here with us every issue of the way.

I look back at the collection of issues we put out this year, and it makes me extremely proud. I think of all the places we've been this year, covering this industry, and it's a true feeling of accomplishment.

Check out the start to my year: I went to Sylacauga, Ala., one week for a feature on Farm-Links, then the next week caught a flight to London for a week-long excursion in England that included the BTME show.

From there, things never once slowed down all year. A quick list: Pebble Beach; Las Vegas; Louisville; Charlotte; Chicago; San Diego; Philadelphia; Baltimore; Denver; New York City; Milwaukee; Minneapolis; Amelia Island, Fla.; Cleveland; Los Angeles; Portland, Ore.; and finally Orlando. And you know I managed to have fun at each stop along the way. I caught a lot of professional golf, a few baseball games, a concert or two and even a professional wrestling event. I also nabbed a What-A-Burger every chance I got, and it shows.

I was riding in a golf cart with a superintendent recently, and we were talking about how lucky we are to be in this industry. "Sometimes you have to pinch yourself," my new friend told me. And he's right, it really is like a dream.

This month marks my second year of living the dream as the editor-in-chief of *Golfdom*. It's been a fantastic two years for me, with a lot more ups than downs.

Hopefully you've noticed some of the changes we've made with this magazine over the last two years, and hopefully you enjoy those changes. And hopefully, you're willing to stick with me as we make some more changes.

This is your fair warning: We kick off 2013 with a completely new look. My column won't look the same. Our departments won't look the same. Even the logo on the cover will look a little different.

If we were a golf course, we'd be on the verge

2012 State of *Golfdom* Address

BY SETH JONES



IN GOLF THEY CALL

IT A RENOVATION,

IN THE MAGAZINE

BUSINESS WE CALL

IT A REDESIGN.

of taking out 700 trees while restoring some native areas. In golf they call it a renovation, in the magazine business we call it a redesign.

Golfdom has had the same look since the magazine relaunched in 1999. While I may like to party like it's 1999, I don't like to read a magazine that looks like it's trapped in 1999. You might be surprised to read this, but Joel Jackson and Karl Danneberger have indeed aged like the rest of us over the past 10 years. Next month, along with the look of their columns, we'll also update their photos, so you can see what those guys actually look like today. (Don't worry, they still look good.)

Pete Seltzer, our vice president of design and production, along with Carrie Parkhill Wallace, our art director, have been working on *Golfdom*'s new look for months now. We've had multiple brainstorming sessions as well as sit-downs with our readers to see what they like, what they don't like, what they want more of.

Some of the changes you've already been reading, such as our back-page Q&A, The 19th Hole, or our photo-heavy *Golfdom* Gallery, showing photos of people and places we've recently visited. A lot more changes are coming next month. I'll be excited to hear what you think.

2012 was a great year for me personally, and just as great for me professionally. I have a lot of people to thank for our professional success, most notably my hard-working staff. But as the holidays roll around and I reflect back on another year in the sun working as the EIC of *Golfdom*, I want to take the time to thank you, the reader.

I'm excited for 2013 and beyond. With your support, the future of *Golfdom* is indeed bright.

E-mail Jones at sjones@northcoastmedia.net.

Goldilocks



DO NOT
OPEN UNTIL
JANUARY 2013

**Coming
next month:**
A new look
for your
old favorite

Taking a Mulligan

■ A WORD FROM THE SENIOR EDITOR

I have a longstanding joke with my father that I've always been more like his son than his daughter.

As a girl, he'd put me on his shoulders so I could dunk the basketball. We'd put on baseball gloves and play catch in the yard. And I'd root for the Cleveland Indians beside him in the stands.

But most of all, I loved Saturday mornings. Because that was when I got to make rounds with him at the hospital.

My dad ushered me gently into the patients' rooms at St. Luke's Hospital. Many of his patients were elderly and reached out weakly to shake my hand. I was shy, I never said much, but I always felt special being there with my dad.

My dad is a second-generation physician. He followed in the footsteps of his father, who had a reputation for being gentle and kind. He tended to patients in an era when doctors cared for entire families, when they made house calls.

My dad may be a specialist, but there's no denying he's the same kind of doctor his father was. Even in the '80s and '90s, well after his contemporaries had stopped making house calls, my dad was still at it. I remember him going off to patients' homes, his father's old leather case in hand, the stethoscope crammed on top.

I asked him once why he became a doctor. He said he revered my grandfather, that he strove to emulate him. But mostly he developed an interest in medicine just from growing up around it.

Jamie Kizer is the same way. The third-generation superintendent was born into the business, and he and his father, Edwin, are the subject of this month's cover story.

I had the good fortune of traveling to Marble Falls, Texas, an-hour-and-a-half west of Austin, to spend the day with them. Jamie is the superintendent at Hidden Falls Golf Club in the small tourist town, pop. 6,700.

The day I spent with them was one I won't soon forget. For, as special as a father-daughter relationship is, it simply cannot replace the unique bond of a father and son.

Marble Falls Calls

BY BETH GERACI



AS SPECIAL AS A
FATHER-DAUGHTER
RELATIONSHIP IS,
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The Kizers showed me firsthand just how close a bond fathers, sons — and grandfathers — have. But much more than that, they proved sharing a career links them even more.

Jamie revels in being a third-generation greenkeeper. In describing what it feels like to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, Roy, who was a superintendent for 36 years, Jamie beams, "It's all about carrying on the legacy."

He regrets his grandpa never lived to see him carry on that legacy (He passed away when Jamie was in 7th Grade.). But Jamie thinks Roy would be proud. As his dad is.

Edwin is far less emotional than his son. Jamie's eyes light up when he smiles. He's full of energy.

Edwin expresses his feelings in words alone, not in his tone. His arms are crossed, his foot taps from time to time, he cracks no smile. But he listens attentively to his son whenever he speaks, and vice-versa.

It's clear — the respect father and son feel for each other runs deep. They're both greenkeepers down to their core, and as different as they are, that's one thing they'll always have in common.

On Sunday, I'll go over to my parents' and watch the Browns game with my dad. They'll probably blow their lead in the fourth quarter, but there's always a tiny chance they won't.

As evening sets in, Dad and I will indulge in a glass of wine, and we'll enjoy the opportunity to spend some time. If my brother lived in town, my dad's Sundays would be a little different, a little more boisterous. He wouldn't be drinking wine — he'd be sipping a brew.

This weekend, the Kizers won't be watching football. They'll be riding around the golf course together, admiring the morning dew.

Their story begins on pg. 18.

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My wife, Amy, and I moved into a new neighborhood about one year ago. That's when it all began. Like all people who move into a new home, you slowly begin meeting your neighbors, getting to know them and eventually the conversation gets around to what you do for a living. At this point in my career I begin the story by saying I'm a consultant and own a golf course renovation company. They generally find this interesting. As the conversation continues and they find out that I was a golf course superintendent who has prepared golf courses for major championships and tour events, things change and the pressure mounts.

I have found that the worst place to conduct a neighborly conversation is in front of your house on the sidewalk because of what is right behind you: your yard. As the neighbors are talking to you, you can see their eyes dart back and forth between you and your grass. And you can slowly but surely see the wheels start turning. In their minds, they are saying, "If this guy has prepared golf courses for major golf tournaments, how come his yard looks the way it does?"

I instinctively start trying to shift the conversation — and their attention — to other topics. But since they too have yards with grass, they want to know how the hot-shot turf manager can help them grow better turf at their homes.

I've tried diversionary tactics, joking about how the plumber is always the one with leaky faucets, or the mechanic the one with the jalopy in his garage. Such diversions never work.

Whether I like it or not, I am the resident expert in the neighborhood. I'm the one expected to solve all turf-related problems spanning several square blocks. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy sharing my knowledge with others. But when I do recommend something, my neighbors generally don't take my advice, because it's not the way their dad did it. My experience has shown me that the nurse next door, the retired accountant down the street or even the blind lady across the way know more than I do. They're just testing my knowledge. In the end, they're going to do it their way no matter what I say.

Talk About Pressure

BY MARK WOODWARD



**I'M THE RESIDENT
EXPERT IN THE
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BLOCKS.**

For example, the nurse and I were overseeding our yards one October day. He asked me if I wanted to borrow his drop spreader to spread steer manure over the ryegrass seed. I replied, "No, that's OK. The seed will germinate without it." One week later, his yard had an incredible stand of ryegrass and I was standing in a yard with spotty germination at best.

None of this bothered me too much, because I knew he had just had his irrigation system overhauled by a contractor. My system, on the other hand, needed some work. Besides, I was out of town for three days and unable to watch my watering cycles closely. I also knew the ryegrass would eventually germinate (which it did).

The problem was, while my grass seed was taking its sweet old time to germinate, the neighbors strolled by, stopping to chat on the sidewalk. I could tell they were comparing my yard with the nurse's. As a defense mechanism, I could have said that like a nurse, I know how to check blood pressure or take someone's temperature. But I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut.

What I did do was glance across the street. When I did, I saw that the blind lady was having her yard overseeded by a professional contractor. I breathed a sigh of relief. At least *she* couldn't blame me.

Throughout my career, I've held high-pressure positions and been under a great deal of stress to produce the best possible turf conditions for the greatest golfers in the world. But none of that pressure compares to my neighbors' expectations of the resident neighborhood turfgrass expert.

Mark Woodward is president of Mark Woodward and Associates, principal of DaMarCo Golf, CEO of MasterStep Golf Management Group and a contributing editor for Golfdom.

With winter's arrival, whether or not to allow golfers to play on the course is always a difficult decision. For many facilities, the decision to close

for the winter isn't an option. Ensuring that increased clubhouse activity caused by winter play generates revenue is becoming more and more critical to the survival of golf clubs.

The agronomic loss to the golf course, therefore, must be included in the revenue equation. When the course is dry and has no snow cover, even if it's cold, golfers want to play and take a golf cart or pull cart. From a turf perspective, all top growth has ceased, and the plant is in a dormant or semidormant stage.

The winter hardening process is similar to how a plant hardens itself off during a summer drought. To harden off, the crown desiccates, and the percentage of moisture in the crown begins to decline along with the plant, sacrificing tissue growth.

Once winter play begins, wear injury from foot and golf cart traffic can happen. The following are situations and practices you might encounter and what you can do in response:

■ **Mowing.** One common practice on warm-season turfgrass most likely to go into winter dormancy is to mow higher in the fall, allowing for more leaf tissue to protect the crown region from wear. If a green needs to be smoothed during winter, it's better to roll than to mow.

■ **Traffic dispersion.** Monitor where wear areas occur from foot or cart traffic. If wear is concentrated, the areas become more prone to compaction and *Poa annua* establishment. If wear areas occur, note them. Because they'll likely be injured during times of summer stress, especially drought stress. Disperse traffic patterns as if you were managing the turf for drought stress.

■ **Compaction.** Concentrated traffic will increase the potential of soil compaction, especially if the soils tend to remain wet. Later in

Watch for Wear Injury

BY KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D.



IF WEAR AREAS OCCUR, NOTE THEM. BECAUSE THEY LIKELY WILL BE INJURED DURING TIMES OF SUMMER STRESS.

the year, compacted conditions will contribute to summer stress by restricting root growth, decreasing soil oxygen levels, increasing respiration rates and decreasing photosynthetic rates. Spring coring should be done to relieve surface soil compaction.

■ ***Poa annua*.** Given that *Poa annua* is a winter annual, germination occurs primarily in the fall. Although the emergence of *Poa annua* in fall and early winter is not always noticeable, it seems to appear out of nowhere in early spring. That's because it takes time to germinate and emerge through the turf canopy. Where wear or openings in the canopy appear, *Poa* might colonize quickly.

Golf courses that see considerable winter play provide golfers with a small artificial mat on which to hit their fairway shots. The mat provides a consistent uniform lie and protects the turf from divots and later, *Poa*.

■ **Golfers.** I believe that most golfers who are willing to play during the winter value their golf courses. So let them know how they can reduce damage to the course when they play during the off-season. Remind them that golf courses that stay open for winter play aren't going to be in as good condition in spring as courses that closed down for the winter.

Because traffic stress and wear injury are major problems on dormant turf, managing a course for winter play can be as challenging as opening or closing a course in the growing season.

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By **BETH GERACI** Senior Editor



A day with a third-generation Texas

a rich family

THE *Kizer* TOUCH



IT'S 9 A.M. IN MARBLE FALLS, a quaint tourist town in the Texas Hill Country, about 50 miles west of Austin. Two construction workers are sipping coffee outside the Blue Bonnet Café. Otherwise, downtown is deserted.

Five blocks away is Jamie Kizer. The superintendent of Hidden Falls Golf Club is waiting in the maintenance shed, an obscure building marked only by three pickup trucks out front.

Hidden here at Hidden Falls is a superintendent with a proud superintendent lineage, a third-generation greenkeeper with strong roots in the industry, bold enough to create his own recipe for strong roots on his course.

super and his father highlights

history and three very different paths.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Inside the maintenance shed, an old TV is blaring. The walls are adorned with family photos, a mounted deer and GCSA plaques honoring Jamie and his father, who founded the Central Texas GCSA in 1974.

Jamie is a third-generation superintendent. It's a fraternity he grew up yearning to be part of, one he got an up close and personal view of while working alongside his father and grandfather as a boy.

His grandfather, Roy Kizer, was a longtime superintendent at Austin's Lions Municipal Golf Course. It was the stomping ground of nearly every renowned golfer to

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All in the Family

Continued from page 19

come out of central Texas — most famously Ben Crenshaw.

Roy died of heart failure in 1975, two years after his retirement. But his spirit still lives and breathes in the city he called home. And in no place is his spirit more alive than in the maintenance shed at Hidden Falls Golf Club.

“My grandfather was the kind of grandfather where when you saw him, you wanted to run and jump in his arms,” recalls Jamie. “He made you feel loved.”

Jamie’s adoration of his grandfather is evident even in silence. Hanging prominently on the wall is a bronzed plaque emblazoned with Roy’s image. In it, Roy’s working on a green, his pants tucked in to high black boots. The plaque reads:

“Roy Kizer, Sr.

*Greens Superintendent at ‘Old Munny’
April 1, 1937-Jan. 31, 1973.”*

“I struck that same pose in my Facebook profile picture,” Jamie says, pulling up the photo on his Droid. There it is, a nearly perfect re-enactment.

Also there is a photo of Jamie’s 11-year-old daughter, Ashley, riding a mower. “If she wanted to become a superintendent, I’d support her,” he says.

It’s proof that though he has Kizer DNA running through his veins, Jamie is his own man. “Dad told me not to be a superintendent,” Jamie recalls. “Because he knew how hard it is, and stressful and all that. But when he told me not to be a superintendent, I was like, ‘I’m going to do this.’”

Given the family’s rich golf history, Jamie was destined for a career on the course. His father was one of eight kids, three of whom went on to be head golf pros. One of them, Gib, spent the off-season playing on the PGA Tour.

Despite that heritage, having been a head greenkeeper for nearly 20 years, today Jamie laments that his dad was right.

“It’s not the glory I thought it was going to be,” he says wistfully. “It’s like being the coach of the football team. If you’re not winning, then everyone throws their jabs at you.”



THE FORERUNNER

The door opens with a loud squeak. In walks Jamie’s dad, Edwin. At 81, Edwin’s tall and unassuming, with a small potbelly that hangs slightly over his waistline. The serious expression on his face veils the wry humor that simmers underneath.

“I was saying you told me not to become a superintendent,” Jamie tells him.

“Absolutely,” says Edwin, emphasizing every syllable. “The same thing Dad told me. He said, ‘Be a policeman, be a fireman, don’t do this.’”

Both men wanted more stable work for their sons. But like Jamie, Edwin ignored his father’s advice. His first superintendent job was at Morris Williams Golf Course, which he helped build for the city in 1962.

From there his career took him to Austin Country Club — where famed instructor Harvey Penick was then the head pro — and on to the Nicklaus-designed The Hills of Lakeway west of Austin. Edwin helped it evolve from an 18-hole course to a 54-hole facility. He managed it all.

“When Dad told me not to become a superintendent,

I was like, I’m going to do this.” — Jamie Kizer