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Golfdom

JANUARY 2012 • VOLUME 68 • NO. 1

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Jonesy's off to the BIGGA show in Harrogate, United Kingdom! Tune in to www.golfdom.blogspot.com as he blogs from across the Atlantic.



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The *Golfdom* Conversation:

David Withers

The new Jacobsen president promises to build relationships with customers and distributors.

By Seth Jones



News and Notes

Just like a golf course, after time, a magazine needs some updating. Recently *Golfdom* sent out a readership survey to see what readers thought of the magazine. Using your feedback, we're preparing to launch a redesign of the magazine scheduled for the March issue.

One of our new regular departments begins this month. We hope readers will enjoy our new back-page feature, "The 19th Hole with..." where *Golfdom* catches up with a superintendent after a round of golf for a cold one.

Coming in Next Month's Issue: Vegas, Baby!

The February issue of *Golfdom* will be our special Golf Industry Show preview issue! Look for these features next month:

- » A hard look at the future of the Golf Industry Show
- » A preview of new products debuting in Las Vegas
- » Las Vegas superintendents on the best deals in town
- » A very special Q&A you won't want to miss (we don't want to spoil the surprise!)

A Special Thank You

After 13 years, we're sad to see the end to Geoff Shackelford's column, "Shack Attack!" The column started out under the name "Golf by Design" and was an architecture column. Shack continues to make great contributions to the golf industry, writing regularly for such publications as *Golf World* and *Golf Digest*. Don't forget to keep up on Shack at those magazines, and to visit his blog, www.geoffshackelford.com. We thank Shack for his dedication to the magazine over the years.

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Off The Fringe

Odds on Vegas



STILL ONE MONTH AWAY, 2012 GIS ALREADY SURPASSING 2011 IN ATTENDEES, VENDORS

By Seth Jones

The GCSAA Conference and Show hasn't made an appearance in Las Vegas since 1997. Early figures on the show seem to be pointing to the GCSAA walking away from Vegas as so few are able to do — as a winner.

"We're already above (our numbers) from Orlando, and that's never happened before," says Julia Ozark, senior manager, tradeshow and activation, for the GCSAA and a 12-year veteran of the association. "We're above on both goals of total qualified

buyers (6,000) and square footage (180,000 square feet)."

Ozark said the goals for the 2012 Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas were set at the same levels as the 2011 show in Orlando. Though last year's show in Orlando was almost 40 percent smaller than it was when the show was there in 2008, Orlando is typically known as the best attended show for the GCSAA.

"Everyone is really excited for Las Vegas — it's been 15 years," Ozark says.

"I think the positive vibe on the show floor last year helped us out. It wasn't doom and gloom last year. People were ready to get back to business."

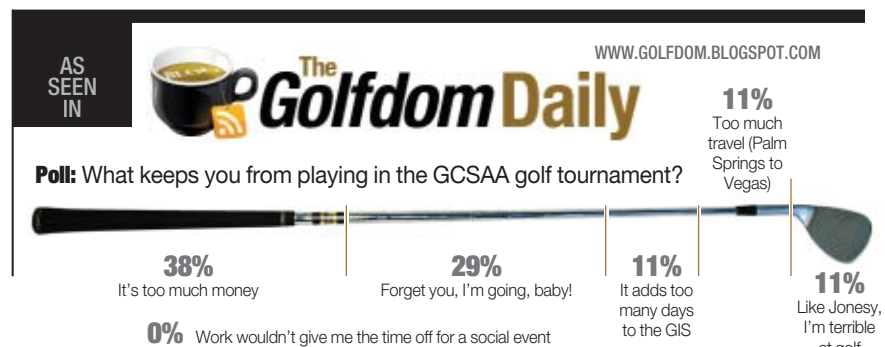
Why Las Vegas has been out of the rotation for the last 15 years has always been a popular topic of gossip among attendees. Is it because GCSAA members party too much in Sin City? Or maybe *not enough*?

"There's nothing specific that's kept us from Las Vegas," says GCSAA president Robert Randquist, CGCS. "We've been there numerous times before. You're always curious how the attractions will affect attendance, but we're not worried — our members are committed to being there for the right reasons."

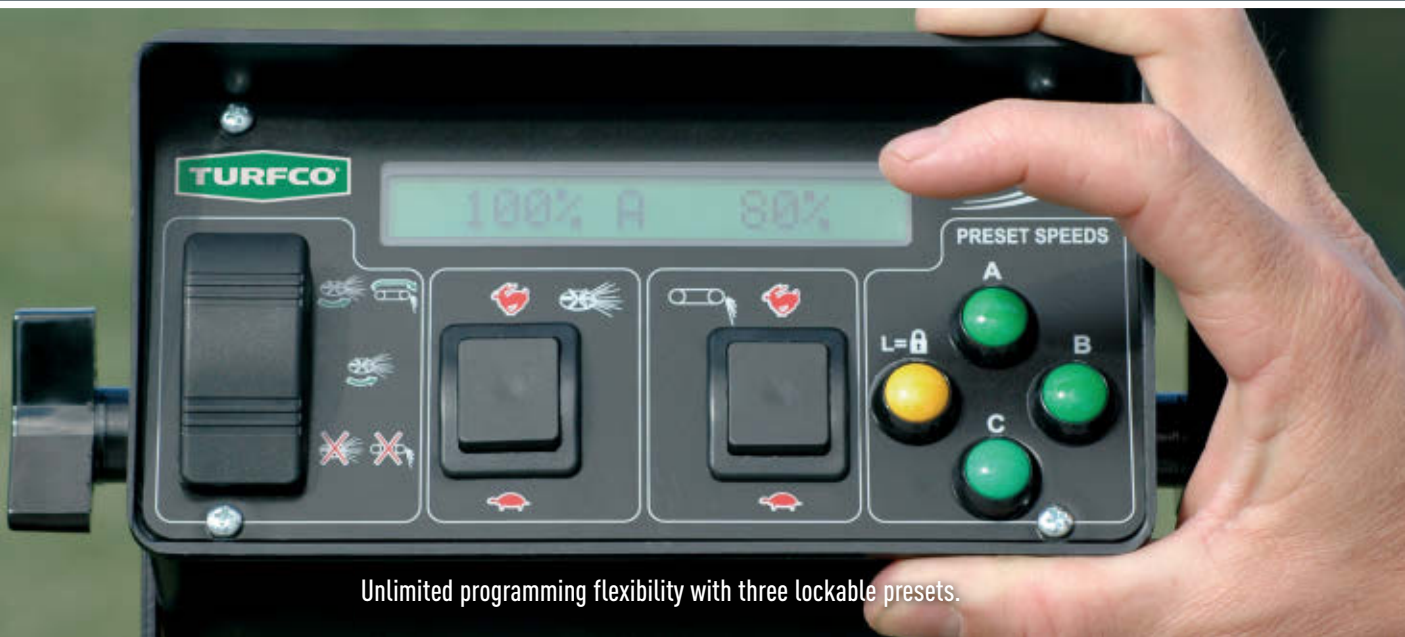
But that doesn't mean the GCSAA will be back in Las Vegas any time soon. And that information is coming from Las Vegas, not the GCSAA.

"It would be difficult but not impossible (to return soon)," Ozark tells *Golfdom*. "They have shows that return to Las Vegas every year. January through March is their busy time. From what they tell us, the dates we want aren't available."

But one thing is for sure: Go all-in on a better-attended and bigger Golf Industry Show in 2012 in Las Vegas than what was held in 2011 in Orlando.



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Lyon Hit by Truck

On Dec. 20th, Dennis Lyon, CGCS-Retired, was hit by a small pickup truck while he was walking his dog.

Lyon suffered serious injuries. He remains in serious but stable condition at the University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora.

According to the family, the majority of his injuries are bone fractures, some of which will have to heal on their own over time. Lyon suffered fractures in his back, collar bone, upper left arm, pelvis, ribs and tail bone.

“Needless to say this accident came as a shock to all of us,” Michael Osley, CGCS at Saddle Rock Golf Course



in Aurora, Colo., told *Golfdom*. “Dennis has had such a huge impact on so many people here in Colorado and within the golf industry. Dennis had just retired last December to enjoy what he described as the ‘2G network’ — golf and grandkids. My thoughts and daily prayers will be for Dennis and his family for the strength, support and love he will need during his recovery.”

A Caring Bridge website has been set up to keep friends and colleagues of Lyon apprised of his condition. Visit <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/dennislyon1> to visit the site. There is

Quotable

“But they might be working for us!”

— Paul Davids, CGCS, Sycamore Ridge Golf Course, Spring Hill, Kan., after a speaker declared that more than half of retirees today have less than \$25,000 in savings and won't be golfing much.

also a guest book to sign for visitors wanting to wish him well.

Lyon, who worked 37 years for the city of Aurora, was the president of GCSAA in 1989.

FRIENDS OF GOLFDOM

Our hat is off to Harold Baldwin, Georgia GCSA President 1963-64, who passed away last October at the age of 91. Baldwin was elected to the inaugural Georgia GCSA Hall of Fame class (along with Palmer Maples Jr., CGCS, Randy Nichols, CGCS, and Charlie Underwood). Baldwin passed away days after learning of his election.

Baldwin was a veteran of World War II, having fought in the Battle of the Bulge. We're thrilled to see that Baldwin, a 50-year veteran of the turf industry, was a proud reader of *Golfdom*, as evidenced by the copy on his desk.



World War II veteran, 50-year turf veteran, Georgia GCSA hall of famer...and *Golfdom* reader.

Sharp Park Golf Course Stays Alive

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted recently not to close Sharp Park Golf Course, much to the dismay of environmentalists who claim the course endangers frogs and

snakes on the course.

The board's vote upheld San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee's December veto of an ordinance that would have closed the course and made it national parkland, meaning golf would be forbidden.

Supervisor John Avalos, who wrote

the ordinance, garnered 6 votes in support of closing the course; he needed 8. Though the course gets a reprieve for now, it's not home free entirely; the case is headed for trial in federal district court this July. Until then, however, golfers know for certain they can tee off all they want.

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It's not often I do this, if ever, but I recently boarded a flight with no plan on what would happen once it landed.

If you follow me on Twitter (@*Golfdom*), you would have seen me joking that I was on a secret mission.

But the real secret about the mission was that I was flying by the seat of my pants. My hopeful interview subject didn't know I was flying out to see him, and I only had a short window to see him — exactly one Friday morning — before my flight back home to Kansas.

I am a big believer in signs. My secret mission got off to a good start when I left my hotel in Cleveland and the good people at the front desk had summoned a limousine to get me to the airport. The next good sign was when the rental car guy offered me a great deal on a beautiful silver 2012 Corvette convertible (he must have liked my Kansas Jayhawks shirt.) As you know, a secret mission is best accomplished with the aide of a 6.2 liter, 430-horse V8 engine.

It took one full day of travel (Cleveland to Charlotte, Charlotte to Phoenix, Phoenix to San Jose) to get to Santa Cruz, Calif. I arrived at Pasatiempo Golf Club early the next day and asked at the golf shop if my hopeful interview — superintendent Paul Chojnacky, who is on the cover of this issue you hold in your hands — was available.

"I haven't seen Paul today, and usually he stops by," the pro shop guy told me.

Uh-oh. Bad sign.

He asked for my name and I told him. He called Paul's cell phone, no answer. He left a voicemail for him, telling him that "Seth Green" was waiting for him at the pro shop.

Being confused for "Scott Evil" from the "Austin Powers" movies? Another bad sign.

I went to the maintenance shop and asked around. Paul was at an off-site meeting, I learned. Big uh-oh. But I haggled his cell phone number and sent him a nervous text.

What a relief. Only a few minutes later he texted me back and said he could meet me in an hour. The secret mission narrowly avoided blowing up in my face.

I waited for Paul in the clubhouse bar. He sat down and we started chatting. "What are

A Secret Mission from *Golfdom*

BY SETH JONES



MY INTERVIEW

SUBJECT DIDN'T

KNOW I WAS FLYING

OUT TO SEE HIM,

AND I ONLY HAD A

SHORT WINDOW

— EXACTLY ONE

MORNING —

BEFORE MY FLIGHT

BACK HOME.

you doing in town?" he asked. I told him, to his surprise, that I was there specifically to see him. And then I told him that he was the winner of the first ever Herb Graffis Business Person of the Year award, which included a trip to the Golf Industry Show and a *Golfdom* cover story. "This is quite a surprise," Paul told me, "but certainly appreciated."

Next year I'll find a less nerve-wracking way to present the award. Maybe we'll lose the Corvette and instead splurge on a giant cake and some fireworks along with an oversized check. But for going in with no plan, my secret mission turned out pretty good. Paul gave me a great tour of his golf course and all the time I needed to make this story work. That story begins on page 14.

And then, compare that to another story in this same issue, written by another superintendent who would surely make *Golfdom* founder Herb Graffis proud. The story is called "Design on a Dime," and it's written by Bill Wall. It's about how he keeps a successful golf operation with a limited budget and limited staffing, and it starts on page 25.

While the Graffis Business Person of the Year story took me five flights, a limo, a Corvette and a lucky text message to complete, the Wall story took all of three emails and one phone call to obtain.

While the two stories vary greatly in how they came to be in *Golfdom*, both stories have in common savvy business people working hard to make their golf operations click. I think readers will appreciate and can learn from both Paul and Bill.

And now... no more secret missions for me for a while.

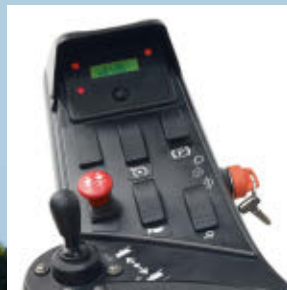
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Evolution is alive and well in the digital world of golf maintenance. We have some dinosaurs struggling to adapt and a new breed of turf-techies thriving in the climate of bytes and pixels. I like to think of myself as perhaps an alligator; a survivor who has adapted.

There's no question that computers are an everyday part of life now. Add in smart phones, tablets and digital cameras and we have a growing arsenal of new tools. These devices can also be time wasters if we get sucked into surfing the net without some self-discipline. Time management is critical when you are a turf manager.

The rise of the Digital Age has raised some interesting issues. First is the multitude of choices in terms of device specifications and features. Newcomers to this world can be intimidated by all the options. Bigger and faster keeps your new device in a constant state of obsolescence. My iPhone 3G is now 2 to 3 generations behind, and it just turned 2 years old in December. I realize that two years ago is like the Paleozoic Age.

Regardless of where you are on the digital frontier; blazing trails on blogs, vlogs, Facebook and Twitter, or playing catch up just learning how to attach photos to an email, one thing remains constant — quality triumphs over quantity every time. You have to do your research and learn the best way to use the newest device just like any new piece of turf equipment or chemical.

One example near and dear to my heart as a magazine editor is high resolution digital photographs. It might be tempting to set your camera to the “basic” or “normal” setting to cram as many pics as possible into the 1 GB memory card that came with your camera. Trust me, buy a 4 or 8 GB card and select the “jpeg.fine” setting so photos can be used in print publications like chapter newsletters and magazines like *Golfdom*.

I know more chapters are opting to go “all-digital” to save money in the budget. That is a case by case decision, but I can tell you that the bigger the publication the demand still remains for a hard copy version. The digital age makes

The Digital Dilemma

BY JOEL JACKSON



**MY IPHONE 3G IS
NOW 2 TO 3
GENERATIONS
BEHIND, AND IT
JUST TURNED 2
YEARS OLD. I
REALIZE THAT TWO
YEARS AGO IS LIKE
THE PALEOZOIC AGE.**

publications easier and cheaper to produce than before, but the image quality still needs to be as sharp as the old 35 mm negative. If you're buying your digital camera make sure it's at least a 5 to 8 megapixel device.

And websites! Just like opinions, it seems everyone has a website. Trouble is when I check in on a chapter's events calendar to see what's coming the next few months, the last entry is 2 to 3 months old. A website is handy because it's accessible 24/7, but it's just garbage if it isn't maintained properly. Even digital tools need routine maintenance.

Another concern I have is that the apparent convenience of digital tools and communications might erode the desire or willingness of superintendents to make the effort to participate in their local association meetings and events. There've even been attempts to create online-only conferences where attendees visit digital booths from the comfort of their Internet connection. As the time-crunch era converges with the digital age, I fear the loss of inter-personal relationships and personal enrichment so many of us have enjoyed in this profession.

You can search databases online for technical information and you might post a query on Facebook, but I maintain that two-way conversations at association events is the best of all worlds. Besides the hands-on answers to problems, you make friends for life by being there in person and not at the other end of a webcam. A 140-character text might get a faster answer than a trip to the local event, but the local event will reward you in so many more ways that can't be counted.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA