

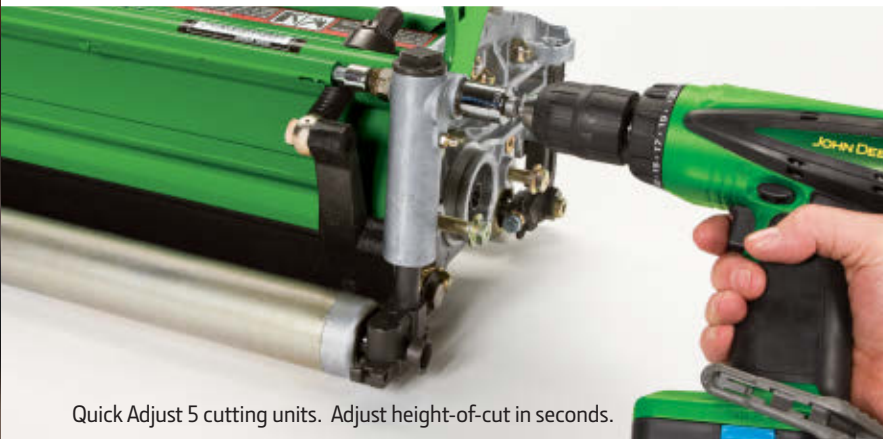
How to be a pioneer as
well as entirely practical.

A close-up photograph of a green machine, likely a lawnmower or similar outdoor power equipment. The machine has a prominent yellow and black logo on its side. The logo consists of a yellow rectangular shape with a black border, containing the number '7500' in a large, bold, yellow font. Below the number, the text 'E-CUT Hybrid' is written in a smaller, yellow, italicized font. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a workshop or garage, with various tools and equipment visible.

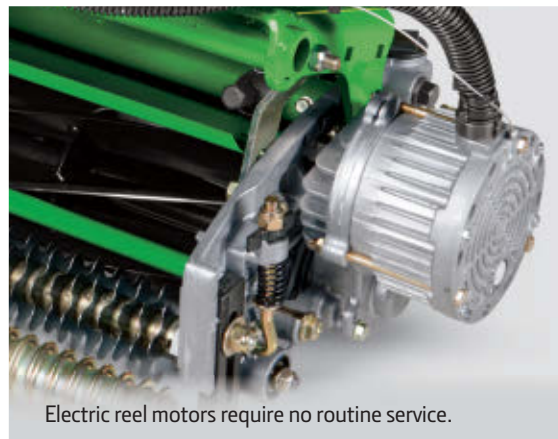
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Golfdom

JUNE 2012 • VOLUME 68 • NO. 6

Celebrating 10 Years of *FarmLinks*

An oral history of one of golf's
most unique experiences

BY SETH JONES

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Plant Progress

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North Carolina-based photographer Chip Henderson took this shot of the FarmLinks crew on No. 5.

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By Anthony Pioppi



Online Exclusive



Stop by the *Golfdom* Daily at www.golfdom.blogspot.com to see the final outcome of our putting greens survey. We got more than 1,000 responses! Also, check out *Golfdom* TV (www.golfdom.com) and catch Seth's interviews with David Pursell and Mark Langner.

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The Hits Keep Coming

Talk about the right start to your summer...

As you'll see in this issue, several things are going on that have our staff here at *Golfdom* smiling. New ownership (**North Coast Media**, see page 8), the **2012 Golfdom Summit** (see page 6) and a slew of **TOCA awards** (see page 7) have had us celebrating on multiple occasions. It's only June, but 2012 is on track to be a stellar year.

Well, we're not done. We're thrilled to introduce *Golfdom's* newest columnist this issue, Mr. Mark Woodward, CGCS. Mark has done it all in his career, from hosting a U.S. Open to serving as GCSAA's CEO, and now he'll be bringing his talents to *Golfdom*. You can read the first installment of his column, "**At the Turn**," on page 12.

Don't worry, we're not losing any of our regular columnists — Seth Jones, Karl Danneberger, Joel Jackson and Clark Throssell will still be writing regularly for the magazine. (In fact, you can catch the first installment of "**Joel's Journeys**," where Jackson does a quick Q&A with an industry leader, on page 7.) But we will be mixing up the rotation of columnists on occasion, just to keep things fresh.

We really hope the Mayans were wrong, because right now we're loving 2012.



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Off The Fringe

Golfdom Summit Back for Another Round

SUPERINTENDENTS ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER AT WWW.GOLFDOMSUMMIT.COM BY BETH GERACI

Last November, superintendents from around the country gathered at Pinehurst Resort in Pinehurst, N.C., for a one-of-a-kind event. No, it wasn't the Men's or Women's U.S. Open, although the resort is hosting both tournaments in 2014.

From where we stand, it was even more exciting — the inaugural *Golfdom* Summit. Superintendents dug the Summit's informal format, which enabled them to meet one-on-one with vendors, hear presentations by industry heavyweights — and network over a round of golf on the famed Pinehurst No. 2.

"When you go to a national show you feel like you're lost in the sea. It's

almost too big at times," said John Genovesi, director of grounds at the Maidstone Club in East Hampton, N.Y., after the first *Golfdom* Summit. "This has been a great event and the strongest aspect of this event has been the small groupings that we've had."

When all was said and done, the 2011 summit's success exceeded even our lofty expectations. And we're determined to top it this year.

The Second Annual *Golfdom* Summit will take place at Orlando's Reunion Resort from Nov. 27-30. Last year's stellar lineup included talks by Rees Jones; Pinehurst Director of Golf Course and Grounds Maintenance Bob Farren; Atlanta Athletic

Club CGCS Ken Mangum; Clark Throssell, Ph.D.; and *Golfdom's* own, Editor-in-Chief Seth Jones.

This year promises to be just as strong. Throssell and Jones are on tap again, along with Stone Mountain Country Club CGCS Anthony Williams. Pasatiempo Golf Club superintendent Paul Chojnacky, *Golfdom's* Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year, will discuss innovative ways courses can save money. And stay tuned, we'll be announcing more speakers soon!

"The first Summit was a blast, and we're looking forward to building on its success in November," said Jones. "It's a positive thing for *Golfdom*, but even more so for superintendents and manufacturers."

With panoramic views and signature courses by Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson, Reunion promises to be the perfect setting for us in November. We'd love to see you there. Register now at www.golfdom-summit.com.



The 2012 *Golfdom* Summit will be held at Reunion Resort in Orlando, Fla.; Bob Farren, CGCS, Pinehurst Resort, gives a presentation on the renovation of Pinehurst No. 2 at the 2011 *Golfdom* Summit (left).

Golfdom Wins Big at TOCA

The magazine earns top honors for new media, plus 6 other awards.

It's lucky seven for the *Golfdom* team. That's seven, as in TOCA awards, thank you very much.

"It's a thrill to have our work recognized by TOCA," said *Golfdom* Editor-in-Chief Seth Jones. "We produce every issue with the reader in mind, and getting positive feedback from our readers and from organizations like TOCA is exactly what we're striving for."

Since its relaunch in 1999, *Golfdom* has won more TOCA Awards for editorial and design excellence than any of its rivals. And at the 2012 Turf and Ornamental Association's annual awards ceremony, held May 3 in Nashville, Tenn., *Golfdom* walked away with accolades for both editorial and design



excellence yet again.

Topping the list, Jones earned the coveted Gardner new media award for best blog, the *Golfdom* Daily (www.golfdom.blogspot.com). For his May 2011 feature about Congressional Country Club, Jones also earned praise for writing for commercial publications, while his story "Dr. Wong gets the girl" garnered him an honor for original content and writing for electronic newsletters.

Golfdom Art Director Carrie Parkhill Wallace, meanwhile, was honored for cover page design ("Turf on Trial," October 2011.) And together, Jones and Wallace earned joint editorial and design honors for April 2011's cover story, "The Reinvention of Mark Woodward" and the magazine's 2011 Plant Health Series.

Golfdom's sister publication *Landscape Management* also shined at TOCA, garnering 9 awards for editorial and design excellence, including the Gardner award for best photography.



WELCOME TO MY FIRST installment of Joel's Journeys. (I'll still be writing my column, but on occasion I'll instead be writing this Q&A.) I recently caught up with **Steve Mona**, President of the World Golf Foundation (WGF), during The Players Championship. Here's what Mona had to say.

I've been hearing from local suppliers that things are looking up this year. What is the current state of the industry?

In my conversations with CEOs, manufacturers, management companies and media, there is a sense of cautious optimism. We seem to have hit the proverbial bottom, and economic indicators generally show we are at least on a gentle northerly incline as people are beginning to travel and spend a little more.

How can we improve our advocacy on water quality, conservation and pesticide issues?

At the state or local association level there is an opportunity to form solid coalitions of golf associations like the national "We Are Golf" effort. The first thing these coalitions have to decide is how they are going to petition state and local governments. If you do have a coalition in place, industry events, such as state Golf Days, can be effective.

On the individual level, you can always learn from a peer who does it well. I'm seeing more superintendent blogs and weekly updates on things like maintenance practices and projects.

What is the biggest disconnect between folks in the golf industry and the public?

Perception. And the biggest opportunity to correct it is continuous education. People think golf can take care of itself. It's a collection of wealthy individuals who work in it, operate in it or play in it. They don't need special consideration. They can take care of it. In certain respects you can view that as a compliment, but it shouldn't be the way we are perceived.



GOLFDOM GETS NEW OWNER



Last month, Cleveland, Ohio-based North Coast Media branched off from Questex Media Group, buying *Golfdom* and four of its sister publications. The deal is a positive one for *Golfdom*. For the full scoop on all the exciting things coming down the pike, check out Publisher Patrick Roberts's letter on Page 8.

Letter from the Publisher

■ BY PATRICK ROBERTS



Dear *Golfdom* readers,

IT'S AN EXCITING TIME to be in the publishing business in Cleveland, Ohio. That's because we have split off from our old company to form a new venture, North Coast Media. And we're looking forward to capitalizing on the opportunity.

Kevin Stoltman, President of North Coast Media (NCM), has assembled an experienced team that is poised to take our magazines to the next level. I've known Kevin for a very long time. We've been through a lot together. I could not be happier for him and prouder to say I work for him and NCM.

Golfdom is no exception. We have been making subtle changes to the magazine and have the best editorial and design team in the business (I'm a little biased, though.) You'll be seeing big things from us coming down the road. I'd love to talk about them here, but I don't want to steal Seth's thunder.

I've been working on this magazine for close to 11 years now. I've enjoyed every single day. I have seen many, many ups and downs, but the ups definitely outweigh the downs. That's the result of three key things.

First, I *love* the game of golf and consider myself lucky to have carved a career in the industry. I owe this tremendous debt to my father, Patrick Roberts Sr., the best man I know.

Second, our readers are an outstanding group that amaze me and challenge me every day. I had the privilege to work for Terry Bonar at Canterbury GC in Cleveland. To say he taught me a lot about the business of maintaining a golf course is an understatement. I might not have known it at the time, but Terry taught me life lessons that I still use today.

Third, our advertising partners care as much about the golf business as anyone. They well know that this has been a tough few years for golf, yet that's spurred them all the more to work tirelessly on your behalf.

Over the years, I've laughed with you, but most of all I've learned from you. As we embark on our exciting new journey as North Coast Media, I expect to have many more laughs — and lessons — in the years to come.

I touch on all of these things to demonstrate that just like all of you, we have a strong passion for the business and the game.

Our business is strong and getting stronger, just like yours. You are going to see some big things from us in the coming months. It's going to be tough to top last year's inaugural *Golfdom* Summit, but we are going to do it. We also are in the process of a long overdue re-design that I've wanted to do for years. I'm happy to say it's finally getting done!

Today is truly an exciting time to be in the golf business. Drop me a note and tell me why you love your job. All of this is why I love mine.

All the best,

Pat Roberts

proberts@northcoastmedia.net





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Has it really been 10 years? Where does the time go? It doesn't seem that long ago that I was sitting in the PTI-max theater in Sylacauga, Ala., for the first time. In reality it was some seven or eight years ago. Maybe nine.

What do I remember most about that trip? Complete honesty here: It was the best, and first, bread pudding I've ever had.

It's true, I was a bread pudding virgin up to that point. Apparently bread pudding isn't on the menu of every Mexican-American family, because it certainly wasn't part of Momma Jones' repertoire.

I've since made a point of trying to find its equal, with no success. That search (and my quest for the best chicken fried steak in the world) is still ongoing, and still adding pounds by the day.

But hey, a quest is a quest.

When I was told that this year marked 10 years of the Experience at FarmLinks, I knew I wanted that story to be told in *Golfdom*.

There is no other place like FarmLinks in our industry, period. I'm talking about the living laboratory that is the golf course. I'm talking about small groups of superintendents. I'm talking about Southern hospitality. I'm talking about getting picked up at the Birmingham airport one minute, then having five new friends in the industry about 60 minutes later.

The thing I find so interesting about FarmLinks is that this company brought everyone to them. David Pursell and his team made this company flourish by getting superintendents from around the world to board a plane and arrive on their home turf. Every pitch in this industry lives or dies based on the opportunity to communicate a message. To get thousands of superintendents to come to you, sleep under your roof and give you a few days to communicate your message sounds crazy. Yet it worked. Repeatedly.

Jeff Higgins estimates he golfed, ate dinner with and then presented for some 6,000 superintendents during his tenure with Pursell

My Friends at FarmLinks

BY SETH JONES



JEFF HIGGINS

ESTIMATES HE

GOLFED, ATE

DINNER WITH AND

THEN PRESENTED

FOR SOME 6,000

SUPERINTENDENTS

DURING HIS TEN-

URE WITH PURSELL

TECHNOLOGIES.

Technologies. How many people in our industry can claim such a thing? And to do so under your own roof — where you're the one serving up the bread pudding?

Being in the communications business, I can't help but admire what they've done there over the last 10 years. With the creation of the *Golfdom* Summit (shameless plug, see page 6) I also feel like I'm trying to play a variation of a song originally written by the folks at FarmLinks.

I visited with my friends at FarmLinks earlier this year, doing the interviews for this story. It dawned on me there that it would be most appropriate to turn the microphone over to them and say, "here." They've been masters at communicating their story on their own terms for so long, who am I to interrupt the transmission?

Rather than pepper you with a snappy intro and ending, I instead hit "record" on the voice recorder and let the people of FarmLinks tell their story in their words. They're good at it. After all, they've been doing it for 10 years.

What most reminds you of FarmLinks? Maybe it's the fellow superintendents you met there. Maybe it's their Southern hospitality. Maybe it's a new method of maintenance you brought back to your own course. Maybe it was the (gasp!) lack of alcohol, which, thankfully, has been relaxed in recent years.

Whatever it is, I hope you'll indulge me and join me for a retrospective celebrating one of the most unique places dedicated to our industry. Their story begins on page 24.

If you haven't been there yet? Work on getting on the invite list. It's worth your time.

And while you're there, do yourself a favor — save room for the bread pudding.

Email Jones (especially chicken fried steak recommendations) at sjones@northcoastmedia.net