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X

A large, light green 'X' mark is placed in the top-left cell of a 3x3 tic-tac-toe grid. The grid is drawn with thin, dark lines on a background of green grass with scattered brown spots representing dollar spot.

X

A large, light green 'X' mark is placed in the center cell of a 3x3 tic-tac-toe grid. The grid is drawn with thin, dark lines on a background of green grass with scattered brown spots representing dollar spot.

X

A large, light green 'X' mark is placed in the bottom-right cell of a 3x3 tic-tac-toe grid. The grid is drawn with thin, dark lines on a background of green grass with scattered brown spots representing dollar spot.

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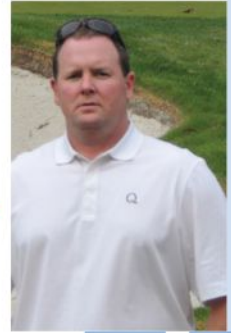
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Chris Deariso; Quail Hollow Club, Charlotte, NC

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// 18

ROAD WARRIORS

These nine men comprise the GCSAA's field staff program. Their mission: to help GCSAA chapters, big and small, across the nation. But can any program be everything to everyone?

BY SETH JONES



The Golfdom Conversation



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Can Gary Lezak See the Future?

Kansas City weatherman says his app is so accurate that he knows the weather for Masters week... a full six weeks out.

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"I'll admit I ignored the email from GCSAA that contained the announcement that Ihms was, like too many superintendents these days, recently unemployed. I realized I missed something important when my phone started blowing up."

SETH JONES, *Editor-in-Chief*

GCSAA's field staff and its president? Oh, my!

I do not consider myself to be a GCSAA watchdog. ¶ My goal is to be a good editor of this magazine. I want to have the most compelling magazine in the industry, from our feature stories and columns to our research and departments. I want you to read this magazine cover to cover every month.

But because my last place of employment was 1421 Research Park Drive — GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan. — I'm occasionally asked if I like to be a thorn in the side of my old employer, and watch over their every move.

The answer would be no. The GCSAA is an important part of our industry, but it is still a part of the industry, and not larger than the industry itself.

And yet our two lead stories this month do focus on the association: a cover story on the field staff program and a Q&A with its current president, Keith Ihms.

First, the topic of the field staff.

I thought I would write this story three years ago. When I left GCSAA in December

2010, this program was a huge concern of mine. Why? Because for two years, I worried I'd lose my job to make room for the new field staff person headquartered in Somewhere, America.

Don't ever expect anyone to have a rationale impression of a person, place or thing when it threatens to take food off his or her table. With a young family, I hated the field staff program. Layoffs were common at the time, but meanwhile they're hiring someone to work out of their home in Florida?

The program is responsible for at least a little of my gray hair. I think even the field staffers themselves will forgive me for resenting the program five years ago.

Since then, I've traveled

extensively for *Golfdom*, visiting chapter events across the country. I'd met most of the field staff by the time I started writing this story. I'd even become friends with a few of the guys.

I'll let the cover story speak for itself. But I am interested in watching this program evolve... Because win or lose, this is an important, substantial investment to GCSAA and its members.

Next topic: my Q&A with Keith Ihms.

I'll admit I initially ignored the email from GCSAA that contained the announcement that Ihms was, like too many superintendents these days, recently unemployed. I was on deadline at the time, and too busy to click to see what was new.

I realized I missed something important when my phone — both office and cell — started blowing up. "What do you know?" *Uh, about what?* "Check your email, moron."

I've known Keith Ihms since I was a kid... we first met when he hosted a stop on the turf tour at GCSAA's conference and show (not yet dubbed the Golf Industry Show) when it was in Dallas in 2001.

While we don't have a secret handshake (yet), Keith has always been friendly and courteous to me. So did I want to call him and ask him, man-to-man, the nature of why he lost his job? Of course not. I do have a soul. But I also have a job. And I felt my job required I ask him.

Ihms was gracious enough to take my call. Hell, as you'll see in the Q&A, he thanked me at the end of our conversation, even though he was doing me the favor. Total class.

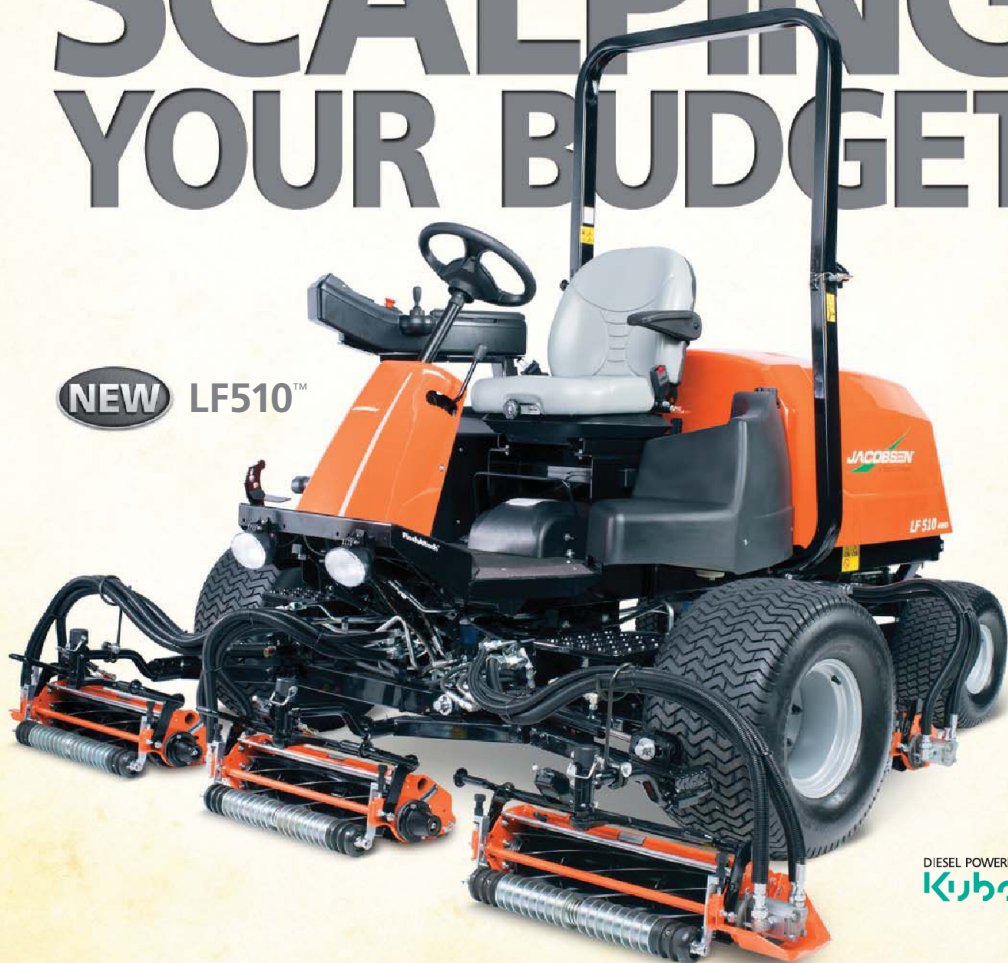
We posted a portion of this Q&A on our website in mid-March. After one day, it was already among the top 10 most read stories posted on *Golfdom.com* for the year.

Golfdom's readers care about the president of their association. And they care about significant investments made by GCSAA, such as the field staff.

Am I a GCSAA watchdog? No. But if it's newsworthy to our readers, then it is important to us.

Email Jones at:
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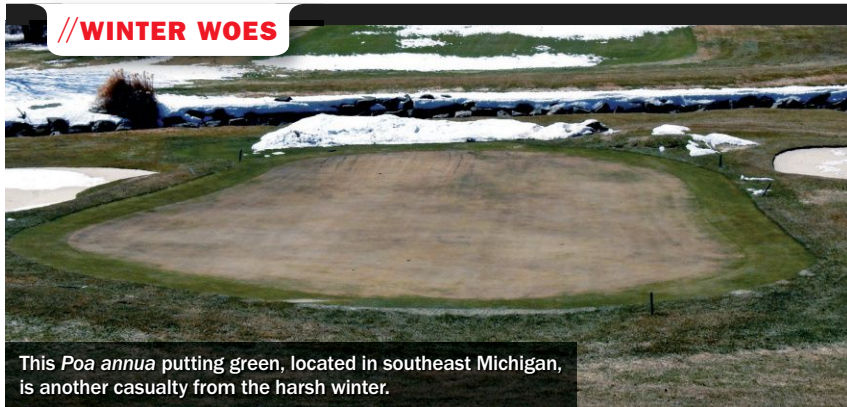
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Starter

NEWS, NOTES AND QUOTES



// WINTER WOES



This *Poa annua* putting green, located in southeast Michigan, is another casualty from the harsh winter.

DAMAGE CONTROL

➔ It's been one heck of a winter. Record cold, the polar vortex and large amounts of ice have created a challenge for superintendents as they prepare for course openings. But what is waiting under the ice?

A recent USGA webinar on winter injury brought together a panel of experts, including Bob Vavrek (senior agronomist, North-Central Region), Bud White (director, Mid-Continent Region), Jim Skorulski (senior agronomist, Northeast Region), Patrick O'Brien (director, Southeast Region) and Darin Bevard (director, Mid-Atlantic Region).

Each of the experts chimed in about the main concerns superintendents will face as winter finally ends.

"It's probably been the most difficult winter in perhaps 20 to 30 years. We still don't know... how much damage we are going to get. There is some confirmed injury to greens in the Detroit area. I've sampled and seen some damage to *Poa annua* in the Chicago area and other reports are coming in about damage," says Vavrek.

The bizarre winter weather not only

hit those in the north, but also in Texas where White saw an extreme flux in temperature day to day.

"We've had such extreme swings. We have had five different times where the temperature has dropped 40 degrees or more from one afternoon to the (next) morning. Almost all of those times the bermudagrass was starting to green up some," says White.

To say that this winter has been unusual seems to be an understatement. "I think for the U.S. as a whole they say this is the coldest six-month period since 1912," says Bevard.

The question now is, what will superintendents face this spring? The panel discussed practices such as the use of blankets on greens that could reduce winter injury. However, now it seems that turf managers will have to wait to see what the damage is. "The combination of the cold temperatures and the ice coverage, I think it's going to be a one-two punch for many golf courses," says Vavrek.

The webinar is still available online. To view it, visit <https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/589258767>.

// HONORABLE MENTION

FMC'S WENDELL CODNER HONORED BY RISE

Wendell Codner of FMC Corp. was recently honored with the "Committee Chairman's Service Award" by Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE). During his eight-year tenure as a member of the programs and membership committee, Codner has helped recruit new members, plan the RISE annual meeting and communicate the organization's message to policy makers, businesses and consumers.



Wendell Codner

"Volunteering is vital to our association and Wendell has been a great leader to the committee," says Aaron Hobbs, president of RISE. "This award is to show him how grateful we are for his time and enthusiasm."

Codner has been with FMC for nearly 30 years. He has held numerous positions, including national sales manager for the Professional Solutions and Agricultural divisions and marketing manager for Professional Solutions. Currently, he is the business manager of Consumer Solutions for FMC Professional Solutions.

// JURY'S IN

LEGAL VICTORY

After a long legal battle, it was announced that LidoChem has won their lawsuit against Stoller Enterprises. Stoller Enterprises Inc., Jerry Stoller and David Alexander were found guilty of violating the Lanham Act by intentionally spreading falsehoods about LidoChem Inc. and its Performance Nutrition products and tortuously interfering with business relationships by a jury trial in the Michigan.

The jury awarded LidoChem \$12 million in damages. LidoChem Inc., through its Performance Nutrition division, supplies patented fertilizers, chelated micronutrients, soil amendments and related products nationwide.

"We are pleased that our good name and reputation have been cleared with the ruling in this case that goes back several years," says Don J. Pucillo, president of LidoChem. "We are eager to serve our valued agricultural customers throughout the region!"

Penn Staters talk winter injury on Golfdom TV

➔ Golfdom TV recently caught up with two Penn State turf experts on the golf course, Dr. Mike Fidanza and Dr. John Kaminski. Though it was warm on the course in Florida, the conversation turned to winter injury concerns. “I think this is the toughest winter I’ve seen ever,” says Kaminski.



With such a harsh winter, the two Ph.D.s each discussed what superintendents may face as the ice clears. “Everyone’s pretty scared about it right now. I think anybody with *Poa* is probably going to have some issues...I think it’s going to be okay, but there’s going to be a few people that are going to be hit pretty hard,” says Kaminski.

Fidanza says it will be interesting to see how this winter will impact the

cold tolerant bermudagrasses that are beginning to be seen in the Mid-Atlantic region and the transition zone. “Coming through the winter, areas that are covered in snow and potentially ice, we’ll keep an eye on these. See how cold tolerant they really are,” says Fidanza.

To view the two short videos and hear what these experts have to say on winter injury, visit golfdom.com/video.

THEY SAID IT

SEAN HOOLEHAN, CGCS

SUPERINTENDENT, WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO, PENDLETON, ORE.

On one of the challenges the GCSAA field staff must overcome:

“The program has done well, but they have to find a new name. Are they regional managers? Regional association specialists? Introducing them just doesn’t sound right.”



EMAILS @ TEXTS # TWEETS

In response to a blog post on the Golfdom Daily (www.golfdom.com/blog) dated March 10th, 2014, announcing the sad news that former GCSAA student services recruiter Lanie Griffin passed away at the age of 60...

Seth, thank you for letting us know this sad news. Lanie was always so gracious. I had the pleasure of working with her on the GCSAA Diversity Committee for several years. She led by example. Lanie was truly one of the quiet, unsung leaders in the golf industry. My prayers for her family.

P.S. I could visualize her as I read your lovely remembrance of Lanie....

Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA
Jan Bel Jan Golf Course Design, Inc.
Jupiter, Fla.

Seth, I just wanted to write and say great choice on the Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year award winner (“Jimmy the Kid,” February 2014) this year. I can only hope to one day leave the kind of legacy Jim (Rattigan) has to a club where I work.

Tyler Otero, superintendent
North Jersey Country Club
Wayne, N.J.

Seth, these last few weeks have been pretty special. I think every person I’ve ever met in this business has reached out to congratulate me on winning the Graffis Award. Thank you again for this honor.

Jim Rattigan, general manager/superintendent
Schuylkill CC, Orwigsburg, Pa.

// GOLFDOM WISDOM

On the day you cancel a \$10,000 golf tournament, it’s best to eat lunch somewhere besides the clubhouse.
#golfdomwisdom

Golfdom Gallery



1 T-Rex in effect! We typically reserve this top spot for a photo of wildlife on the course, but this month we go with Rex, the drunken dinosaur we ran into at the New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation Show.



2 Is there a doctor in the house? The recent Di Giorgio wedding was a beautiful event, thanks to Damon's beautiful bride Karina. But we feel sorry for whomever Fieldstone GC's super seated with Dr. Mike Fianza (Penn State), Dr. Rick Brandenburg (N.C. State University) and Dr. Lane Tredway (Syngenta Crop Protection). Annual bluegrass weevil just isn't common wedding reception banter, you know?

3 Bachelor party, minus the bachelor Fianza manages to get in two photos in one issue (who does he think he is, Seth Jones?) along with fellow PSU prof John Kaminski, Ph.D. (with iPhone in hand, natch) and Quali-Pro's Jerry Corbett (center), out on the course in Florida.



4 T-Rex stalker Look closely... that T-Rex lurks in the background of this pic with North Coast Media's Chris Lavelle, Dartmouth College's Mike Wade, Turfco's Chris Francis and Ryan Green, Crystal Lake GC, Haverhill, Mass. taken following the NERTF show in Providence, R.I. You buy one beer for some old dinosaur you think is in the industry and then he won't leave...

5 Field staff or shuffleboard champs? GCSAA field staffers Brian Cloud, Jeff Jensen, Chase Rogan and David Phipps got the full tour of Golfdom EIC Seth Jones' "second office" — Rick's Place in Lawrence, Kan. Turns out the guys know their way around a chapter meeting as well as a shuffleboard table.



PHOTOS BY: EMILY LAVELLE (1 AND 4)
LARRY GATES (2) / SETH JONES (3 AND 5)