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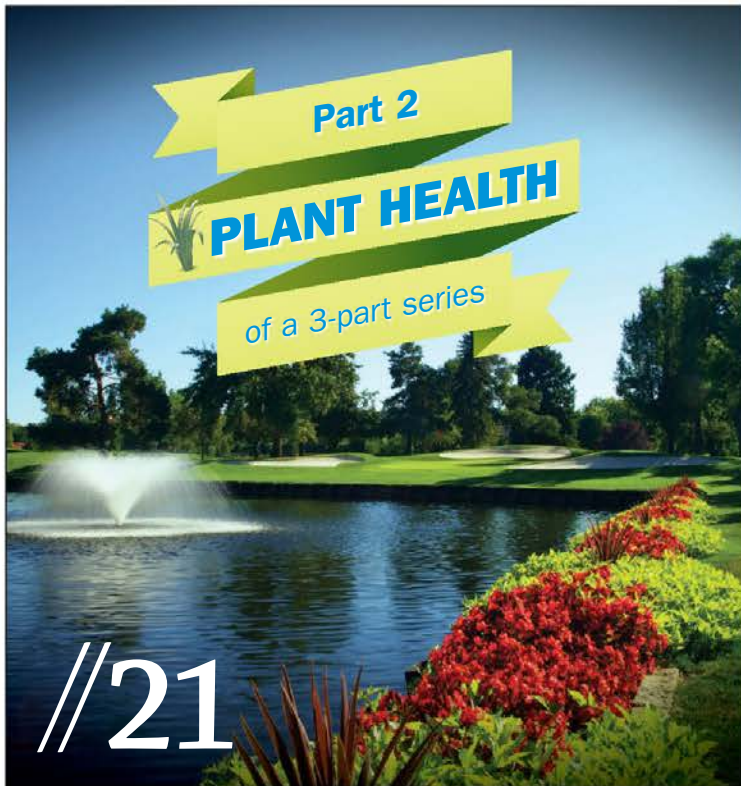


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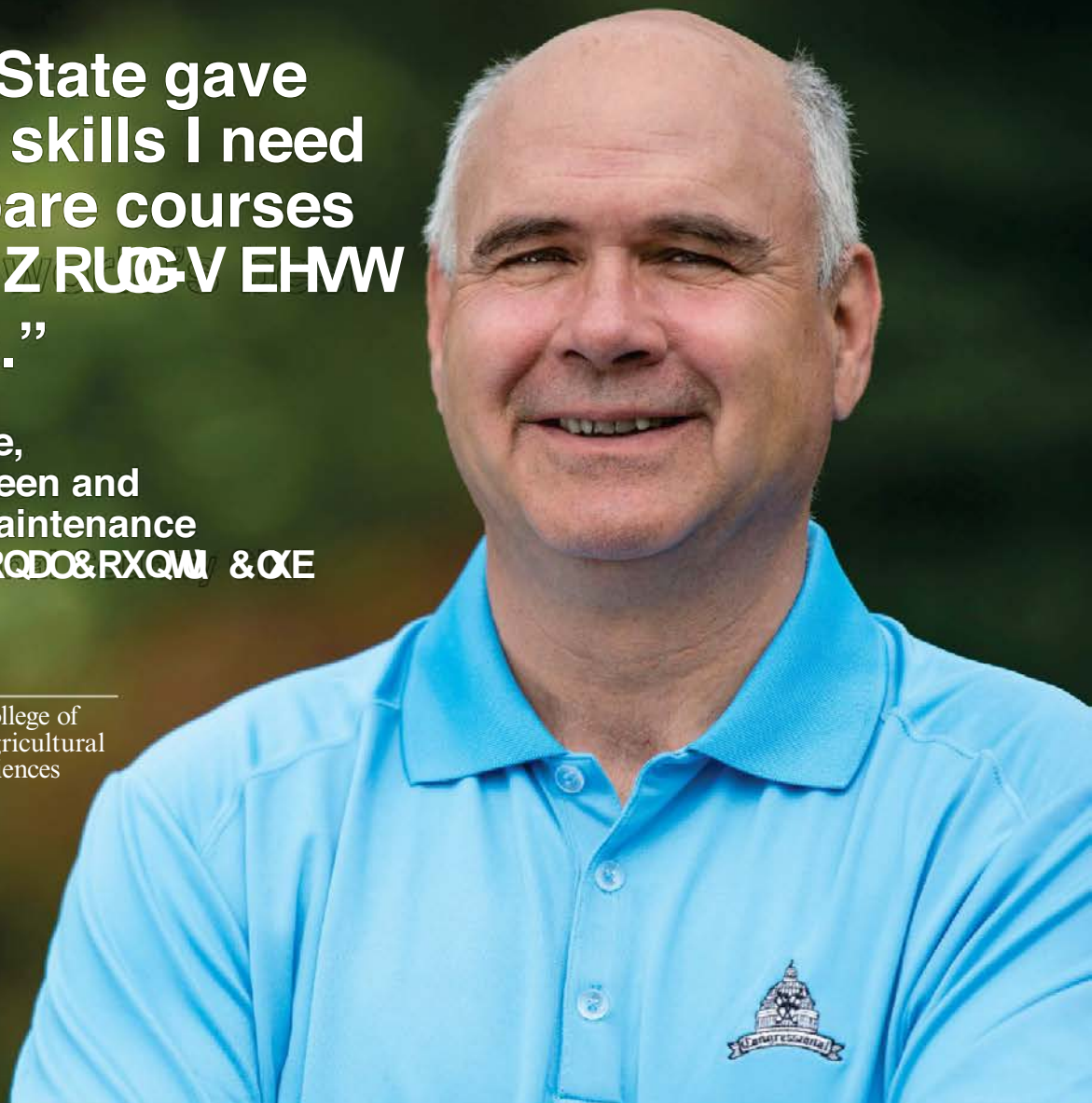
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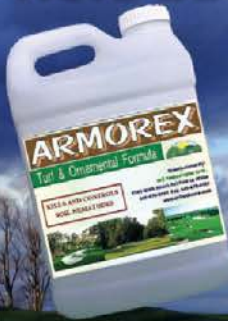
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“No room service, no cable TV, no wi-fi, but talk about a room with a view!”

**SETH JONES**, *Editor-in-Chief*

## This place is The Pit

**I** have had the good fortune to stay in some pretty nice places in just the few years I’ve been working for *Golfdom*: Trump Towers in Chicago; The Rittenhouse in Philadelphia; The May Fair in London, to name a few that really stand out.

As you might imagine, The Pit is not among the nicest places I’ve stayed.

However, it might be the most memorable.

The Pit isn’t a hotel. It’s a golf course. Well, it was a golf course.

The Pit Golf Links, located in Aberdeen, N.C., was a Dan Maples layout opened in 1985. It was celebrated regionally for its zany design that included blind tee shots, zigzag fairways and an island green.

Sadly, like many courses, The Pit met its demise a few years ago. Since then, Robert Dedman Jr., owner of Pinehurst Resort, bought the property. Rumor had it that this land would become Pinehurst

No. 9. With Pinehurst’s recent acquisition of National GC (see page 10) it is obvious The Pit will not become No. 9.

Whatever becomes of The Pit, I will fondly remember it as the place I called home during the 2014 U.S. Open. No room service, no cable TV, no wi-fi, but talk about a room with a view! And what an experience!

I arrived late on the Sunday night preceding the U.S. Open. I met my new housemates for the week on night one. There was Carlos Sanes, Penn State intern, from Stroudsburg, Pa.; Matthew Jones, senior assistant superintendent from The Landings Club, Savannah, Ga.; and two Iowa State University juniors; Ryan May and Desmond Decker. Jones was back after

interning for two seasons at Pinehurst in 2010 and 2011.

There were five of us calling The Pit home for the week, but not a lot of socializing. Sure, these guys were young, but this was no Animal House. After all, they were working 16-hour days. Sleep was at a premium.

Sanes was my tour guide upon arrival. He advised me that it might be best to enter through the rear — those stairs were safer. Good advice. The front stairs were pretty wobbly, and I’m too heavy to take that risk.

The “master bedroom,” which they allowed me the honor, was elevated from the main floor, with a sunken service area in front of it. Was this where golfers checked

in with the pro shop 20 years ago?

My bathroom was the women’s locker room. Our kitchen was the old kitchen for the grill room. Some of the old signage remained, asking golfers to proceed to No. 10 tee as quickly as possible, or to be careful for lightning.

It was fun, and bittersweet, to look around and imagine what this place must have been like 20 years ago. Golfers milling in and around racks of golf shirts, golf shoes, golf balls and I’m sure nice shiny displays of the newest golf clubs. I wonder how many played their first round of golf at The Pit, or carded their only hole in one?

But life goes on.

And not that I’m speaking from experience, but a word of advice if you find yourself alone in a dark, barren clubhouse visualizing that scene, and if you’re the type (again, not me) who is easily spooked by emptiness: Playing music makes it feel a little less foreboding, a little less like Jack Nicholson might start chopping down a door with an axe, shouting, “Here’s Johnny!”

I was honored that the team at Pinehurst put me up in The Pit, and I thank those guys for all their hospitality. Though it won’t make my list of the all-time nicest places I’ve stayed, it will be an all-time fond memory of a great event, a great week and some great guys.

Email Jones at: [sjones@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:sjones@northcoastmedia.net).



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# Starter

NEWS, NOTES AND QUOTES



## // NEW IDEAS



Danesha Seth Carley and Kevin Robinson, CGCS at Pinehurst No. 2, take a look at some of the vegetation on the course. "Normally on a course in North Carolina you'd think you wouldn't want cacti on a golf course, but it has a beautiful yellow flower," Seth Carley says. "And as long as it's in the right place, it's not considered a weed."

## UNFAVORABLE LIES

BY SETH JONES // Editor-in-Chief

➔ During the 2014 U.S. Open at Pinehurst No. 2 — which, as of press time, was underway — the golfing public got to see something they might not be used to on the pristine courses that host TV golf: weeds.

Or, better put, native vegetation.

"The definition of a weed is technically a plant that's out of place," says Danesha Seth Carley, Ph.D., a professor of crop science at North Carolina State University. "Part of managing this vegetation is just realizing that while some of them you might consider a weed in a golf course environment, we actually liked them here (at Pinehurst No. 2)."

With the renovation of Pinehurst No. 2, the course was brought back to what it looked like when Donald Ross built it: sweeping sandhills with wire grass spotting the landscape. As the crew removed all the overseeded bermudagrass rough, they had to forget

one type of maintenance, and learn another.

"(The maintenance team) asked us to come in and help them identify the vegetation, and then take it a step further: help them with potential ideas on how to manage vegetation, whether they wanted to keep it or remove it or even move it around to different places," Seth Carley says. The project, funded by Bayer and conducted by N.C. State, allowed the crew to learn the ins and outs of this new vegetation as it sprouted up around the course.

Tom Ruffy, Ph.D., professor of environmental plant biology at N.C. State, believes the 2014 U.S. Open may be the coming out party for this type of maintenance.

"The big driver is economics. The cost of pesticides and fertilizers is going up and budgets are tight," he says. "Lowering resource use only makes sense."

## // ACQUISITION

### PINEHURST ACQUIRES NATIONAL GOLF CLUB

Pinehurst Resort & CC completed the acquisition of National GC under terms finalized with current club owners, the Robinette family. The Jack Nicklaus Signature Design course, also located in the Village of Pinehurst, N.C., opened in 1989 and is the only course by the famed designer in the Sandhills region.

The course will be named Pinehurst No. 9 and is immediately available to Pinehurst CC members. Pinehurst Resort guests will begin play at No. 9 in early July. Pinehurst recently completed a \$4 million renovation of its clubhouse and has plans for an expansive, multi-million dollar aquatics facility targeted for completion in summer 2015.

## // NEW ADDITIONS

### JACOBSEN ADDS ROB COOKE

Jacobsen recently named Rob Cooke territory sales manager. As a part of



Rob Cooke

Jacobsen's sales team, Cooke will be responsible for supporting dealers and customers in eastern Canada and will be based in Ontario.

Cooke has over 17 years of experience in the golf and municipal markets, serving a variety of sales and service roles at Vaden Bussche Irrigation, Rain Bird Canada, SMART Watering Systems and Holmes Irrigation/Aqua Turf Canada. Cooke is a certified irrigation designer, water conservation manager, landscape irrigation auditor and irrigation contractor.

"This position is critical for Jacobsen as we continue to develop and grow long-term relationships with dealers, customers and associations in eastern Canada," says Ric Stone, VP of sales and marketing for Jacobsen. "Rob's golf irrigation background has given him a great understanding of the Canadian turf industry and will help us expand our reach in eastern Canada."