



## The Back Page

By Gordon Witteveen

# Good News, Bad News

**F**rom time to time, we hear of colleagues being dismissed after many years of service. Such calamities are of great concern to us all. Some of my best friends have suffered this fate and I suffered with them. But all is not bad in the corporate world of golf—there are plenty of good guys still around. It is with joy that I relate the following story in which the good guys happen to be good women.

John Stein was employed by the Ladies Golf Club of Toronto for 18 years. He started as a youngster and became a diligent employee, developing a love for golf and the outdoors. He completed the Seneca College Golf Course Technician Program and once the previous superintendent moved on, the ladies gave Stein the job. That was more than a dozen years ago. He continued to work hard, often with limited resources, but the ladies made money available for much-needed improvements: the maintenance facility was expanded; a new irrigation system was installed; trees were planted; and the entire golf course received a facelift when the bunkers were repaired. All this work was shepherded by Stein and his crew, and the golf course improved greatly along the way.

Late last winter, Stein was called to manage the family golf enterprise in Port Elgin, Ont. His mother had passed away and his father was getting older. Reluctantly, he resigned from his position at the Ladies. In September, the club's members showed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication that Stein had exemplified. They presented him with a new golf cart and an honorary membership—the only man ever to receive such a distinction in the 77-year history of the Ladies Club. Congratulations John!



### Losing a friend

CGSA and its superintendents lost a good friend recently when Bruce Forbes passed away at the age of 79. When CGSA was born in 1966, the fledgling association received a great deal of support from the Royal Canadian Golf Association, with Bruce Forbes at the helm. Forbes helped CGSA get off the ground and encouraged its growth. He was

also a lifelong green chairman at Brantford Golf & Country Club with a deep appreciation for superintendents' work. He will be missed.

### International recognition

The International Turfgrass Researchers met in Toronto during July. It was an amazing event, with more than 400 scientists from all over the world taking part in lectures, research reports and field trips to Guelph turfplots and area golf courses. The logistics must have been staggering but Pam Charbonneau of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, with the help of an active committee, certainly made Canada look good in the eyes of the world.

### Remember when?

Do you still remember where you were when President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas? The day Paul Henderson scored the winning goal against the hated Russians? Or when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down? All of these events are etched forever in my mind, as will the terrorist attacks on September 11. I was on a plane on the way to Kansas City when the twin towers were struck. Somewhere over Michigan, the plane suddenly banked steeply to the north and the pilot announced we were returning to Toronto due to the terrorist attacks in New York. A subdued group of passengers sat in silence as we contemplated the rest of our lives.

### Swan song

After three books, a Spanish translation and hundreds of columns, my reputation as a writer is not in danger, but it still hurts a bit to get the pink slip. I guided *GreenMaster* during its first five years as editor and writer and I am immensely proud that the magazine I started has survived for almost 40 years without a name change.

During the last five years, I have written commentary on the back page. While not always to everyone's liking, many readers have told me that The Back Page is the first page they reach for when the magazine arrives at the doorstep. That is very gratifying, but all good things must come to an end and this has been my last column. The next time you'll see my name at the head of a short paragraph in this magazine, it may very well be atop my obituary. Don't be alarmed—I am as fit as a fiddle, but death, taxes and pink slips are hard to avoid. ♀