



# COOKING THE BOOKS

Pete Cookingham awarded 2005 USGA Green Section honors.

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**P**eter O. Cookingham, project manager of the Turfgrass Information Center at Michigan State University Libraries, received the United States Golf Association's 2005 Green Section Award. The award was presented by Bruce Richards, a member of the USGA Executive Committee and chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee, at the Golf Industry Show on February 11, 2005, in Orlando, Florida.

The USGA Green Section Award is given annually by a distinguished panel of experts in the turfgrass field and recognizes persons for distinguished contributions to golf through work with turfgrass.

Pete has expertise in both library science and recreation and park administration. He is a 1974 graduate of the University of Wyoming with a

B.S. in recreation and park administration. After serving two years in the Peace Corps in South Africa, he returned to Wyoming to complete a Master's degree in recreation and park administration in 1979, and he earned a Master's in library and information science from the University of Illinois in 1985. He joined the Michigan State University Libraries in 1985.

For 20 years, Cookingham has guided the development and expansion of the largest collection of turfgrass literature in the world. As the librarian at Michigan State University Libraries, he has been instrumental in building and overseeing the Turfgrass Information Center (TIC), which houses more than 100,000 accessions covering all aspects of turfgrass research, science, and culture. Included in the collection are more than 80 years of USGA Green Section publica-



tions and 20+ years of USGA-sponsored turfgrass research. This sophisticated system provides computer access to important information for golf superintendents, scientists, practitioners, and students around the world.

The Turfgrass Information File, often referred to as TGIF, is fundamentally about optimizing the use of one of turf's great legacies — its literature — and making it available to the public at large. The TGIF has four primary functions:

- Locate, collect, and preserve published and unpublished materials relating to turfgrass science, culture, and management of facilities such as golf courses, parks, sports fields, lawns, sod farms, roadsides, institutional grounds, and other managed landscapes;
- Create an online index and abstracts of the materials;
- Streamline online access to the collection; and
- Support turfgrass scholarship with both physical and electronic infrastructure.

Widely admired and respected by turfgrass scholars and practitioners who routinely turn to him for information-gathering assistance, Pete goes the extra mile to assist those with special needs with calm perseverance and a positive attitude. In accepting the award, he commented, "For me, there can be no higher honor than being recognized by one's users. I am so humbled by this award, and I only hope that I can continue to be of service to you all, for the good of the game."

In accepting the award, Pete acknowledged the Michigan State University personnel involved in TGIF, and he made a point of recognizing some of the key individuals who helped guide the advancement of TGIF through its critical devel-



Pete Cookingham,  
2005 USGA  
Green Section  
Award recipient.

opment years: the O.J. Noer Foundation for getting the ball rolling and continuing its involvement; Bill Bengeyfield, then national director of the USGA Green Section; and Dr. Jim Watson and Dr. Paul Rieke, members of the USGA Research Committee, for having the vision to recognize the potential and need for such a database and the perseverance to stay the course through both the good and rough times; Dr. Jim and Harriett Beard for their career-long scholarly pursuit of turfgrass literature; and individuals such as Danny Quast, Bill Middleton, and many others who stepped in at critical junctures in the development life of TGIF.

The USGA has been a longtime proponent of turfgrass research and an ardent supporter of the Turfgrass Information File. Pete Cookingham has made this dream a reality.



USGA staff members  
(left to right)  
Jim Moore, Jim Snow,  
Pete Cookingham,  
Kimberly Erusha,  
and Mike Kenna have  
long been involved  
on the Turfgrass  
Information File  
advisory committee.