

Lonnie Stubbs: A Man of Enduring Quality

BY SCOTT BELL

It is rare in this business for a person to stay at one club for an entire career. Lonnie Stubbs is an exception to the rule. This year marks Lonnie's 35th year at Club Med at Sandpiper.

In the late 1950s, Lonnie was doing landscape work for General Development Corporation at a housing development in Vero Beach. He was approached about going to work at the then-named Sandpiper Bay Country Club. At that time General Development Corporation, or GDC, had many projects going on all over the state in such places as Miami, Port St. Lucie, Labelle, Palm Bay and others.

Lonnie started at Sandpiper in 1960 as the assistant golf course superintendent, under the well-known architect Chuck Ankrom. Lonnie has been at Sandpiper since the construction of the Sinners Course in 1960. The Saints Course was built in 1961.

The original director of golf was Chick Howard, who is in the Golf Hall of Fame. After Chuck Ankrom left, LeRoy Phillips, a 1992 President's Award recipient, filled in as golf maintenance director for GDC. In 1974 Lonnie became the head superintendent.

Lonnie takes great pride in the fact that he was there in 1960 when the property was being surveyed and that he is still there today. He helped to oversee every facet of the construction, and he knows the property like the back of his hand. As I drive down US 1 in Port St. Lucie past the shopping centers, malls and fast food, I can't help but to think of what it was like in the 1960s when the area was sparsely



Lonnie Stubbs

settled. Consider also the changes in equipment and irrigation that one would see over 35 years.

Lonnie has worked for three different owners of the Sandpiper property. The first was obviously GDC. The second was a company called Tulman and Huntley, who currently own the property and now lease the golf courses to Club Med. Club Med, a French vacation company with holdings all over the world, has been at Sandpiper for over eight years. Lonnie oversees the two golf courses and a nine-hole pitch and putt, as well as the hotel grounds. When Lonnie worked for Tulman and Huntley, they had a day to celebrate his 25th year at the club. Many superintendents were invited for lunch and golf.

Lonnie's son David is following in his

father's footsteps. David is one of Lonnie's assistant golf course superintendents. Two of his other sons, Lonnie Jr. and Thomas, also work on the courses at Sandpiper.

Like Joe Snook and 1990 President's Award recipient Adam Yurigan, Lonnie was a founding board member of the Treasure Coast Chapter. Lonnie was president of the chapter in 1982, second after the legendary Yurigan. Most of the Treasure Coast board meetings were held at Sandpiper between 1980 and 1985. Lonnie, Joe, Adam and Jim Callaghan got the Treasure Coast Chapter started in 1980, and most of them helped out for the first five or six years to help to grow the chapter. They are owed many thanks for that hard work.

Former Treasure Coast Chapter President Jim Callaghan commented that "it is a heck of a milestone for a superintendent to be in the business for 35 years, especially at the same club."

Lonnie and his long time friend, Joe Snook, were both given their President's Awards in 1994. They both exemplify the credentials searched out for the award. They were both instrumental in the formation of the Treasure Coast Chapter, and they easily had the twenty years in the business with ten years as superintendents. To me, they took it a step further. They are an example of what has always been right about our business. Two friends at different courses, helping each other out. When the Treasure Coast Chapter nominated them, someone made the comment that "you can not nominate one without nominating the other."

Joe Snook: Treasure Coast's Mr. Versatility

BY SCOTT BELL

A good pilot tries to change direction when he sees rough weather ahead, and that's what Joe Snook had to do in 1973. Joe was a pilot for a well-known national company when he realized that the quality of the aircraft that he was flying was beginning to decline and the company was not upgrading or replacing the planes as quickly as they had in the past. He

feared that the company that he worked for would soon be discontinuing or scaling back its corporate flight division, so Joe searched out his old friend, Tom Burrows, who was working in Stuart at the time. Joe had worked part-time for Tom when he was not flying and they both worked in Chicago.

In 1974, Tom Burrows was the Golf and Landscape Director at Mariner Sands

in Stuart. He hired Joe to work in the landscape division of the development company. Shortly after Joe began working, his immediate boss moved on and Joe was put in charge of the landscape division. Unfortunately, the development company was struggling and rumors of bankruptcy were floating around. Tom left his position, and Joe was asked to run the golf course as well. Joe ran the first

Joe Snook: A friend to many —

eighteen until one day when the comptroller for the project approached Joe while he was mowing the first green. Joe was told to gather the staff and lock up all of the equipment in the maintenance building — the company was closing the doors. Joe asked if he could finish mowing the green and was told that there was no need to because they were going to let the course go. He then reminded the comptroller that they had not been paid. Joe was told "no problem, just go down to the pro shop and take what you think your last pay was worth." Joe got a set of clubs and some sport jackets as his final pay. The course was let go for a period of time, and the grass and weeds did grow up.

Joe was unemployed for only two days when the pro that he worked with at Mariner Sands called and told him of a job at Riverbend in Tequesta. Joe has

been at Riverbend Country Club since 1975. His course is always in fine shape, thanks to his years of dedicated service. He was also back near his buddy Tom, who had been working at Turtle Creek in Tequesta. Joe has been working with his assistant, John Scotten, for those same 20 years and he has enjoyed their relationship.

In the 1970s, the South Florida Chapter included Palm Beach and the Treasure Coast, as well as Dade and Broward. For meetings, the guys would often have to drive to Miami or Ft. Lauderdale. Joe and Tom would join up with Lonnie Stubbs to attend the SFGCSA meetings. Tom and Lonnie got Joe signed up to join the GCSAA. In 1980, Joe helped to form the Treasure Coast Chapter. The area was growing and more courses were being built. Joe served as president of the Treasure Coast Chapter in 1983 and 1984.

Jim Callaghan, superintendent at Rio Mar Country Club in Vero Beach, has known Joe since the late 1970s and says, "Joe was instrumental in getting the chapter started." Jim said that Joe could always be counted on to come through.

Tom Burrows and Joe have been friends for nearly 30 years. When I asked Tom if he had any good stories to tell about Joe Snook, he replied, "There are not enough hours in the day to tell all of the stories about Joe Snook."

Joe Snook has been involved in golf course management for over twenty years and he helped start the Treasure Coast Chapter. Joe was an integral part of the first board here. Joe has been a friend to many. In fact, Joe was part of a dual nomination for the President's Award in 1994. His long time friend and colleague, Lonnie Stubbs, is also honored in this issue.



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