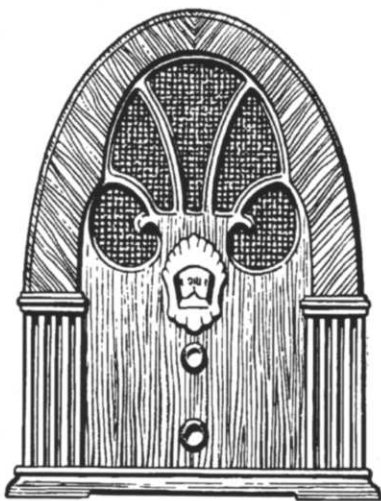


# Public Relations: Talking the walk

BY DARREN DAVIS, CGCS  
*Olde Florida Golf Club*



**A** couple months ago, I was driving down the road doing what I often do when I drive, listening to a talk radio station here in Naples. The host was discussing the recent Manatee deaths here on the West Coast of Florida. Many people believe that the deaths are related to the bad outbreaks of red-tide that occurred this year.

However, as I drove down the road that day listening to the host, a caller phoned in to give his view on the whole scenario. He started with, "I have lived in Naples for 30 years and when I moved here there was only a handful of them there golf courses. Now, they're hundreds of em' and every where you turn there is another one popping up. I think it's them damn golf courses that are killing the Manatees"

For those of you that are uncertain, Yes, he spoke with a very strong "Florida redneck" accent. Regardless, he spoke, and he was heard!

The host took a middle-of-the-road response to the caller. The host said, "The golf courses certainly might be part of the cause." He also announced, "There is one good golf course in Naples."

Then he then gave a few details on the course. I waited all of about ten seconds

before I called in to respond. I gave a few facts about golf courses including how they benefit the environment as well as the community and I also informed the host that there is more than one golf course in Naples that was good for the environment.

Unfortunately, situations such as these often go unchallenged, or not responded to. After all, we all have jobs to do and certainly cannot monitor every radio or television show.

However, if we want to continue making progress on this issue, the Golf Course Superintendent is going to have to respond to this type of attack, and respond in positive manner.

Remember, people's minds are changed through observation, not argument. So respond with facts, respond in a caring, concerned manner, but most importantly, *be heard*.

The golf course superintendent knows that all golf courses provide numerous benefits to the environment and the community but, unless they let others know, only the few outspoken people on both sides will be heard.

## **A proactive response**

The EGCSA committed \$1,500 to run

### **Announcement #1**

"Golf Courses aren't just a place for golfers, they also harbor lots of wildlife. Thousands of furry and feathered species make their homes in the natural places around professionally maintained golf courses of South West Florida. Expertly maintained courses offer wild life species a place to live, grow, prosper and reproduce all while offering the golfer a place to play. Golf courses utilize large amounts of community waste water thereby reducing the need to dump effluent into the bay and gulf lessening fresh water intrusion. Golf courses are also good for the atmosphere, in that it provides life giving oxygen while cooling the air. Bird houses and feeding stands can be found on many courses encouraging wildlife to make their home where they're protected. The thrill of seeing a wild deer run across a course or a bald eagle overhead is one long remembered. So when you drive by or play a golf course in Southwest Florida, know that their owners and managers do take their ecological responsibilities seriously. The Everglades Golf Course Superintendent Association just thought you might like to know."

*Naples area superintendents, Tim Hiers (left) and Darren Davis (right) join WNOG Talk Radio host, Dr. Kris Thoemke on his show, "Florida Outdoors," to discuss environmental issues and golf courses.*



a three-month radio announcement on WNOG 93.5 Talk Radio. The \$125.00 weekly investment includes: production of the announcement; 3 spots per show; 4 sponsorship acknowledgments each week; and 1 sponsorship "Billboard"

opening the show each week for a total of 8 exposures each week.

The announcement is currently being aired on the call-in talk show, "Florida Outdoors" hosted by Dr. Kris Thoemke. The show airs each Tuesday between 11:00

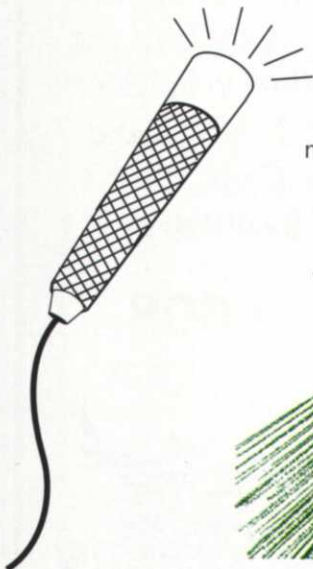
am and noon and on Saturday between 8 am - 9 am.

Dr. Thoemke brings a wide variety of environmental topics to the WNOG-FM audience. According to Dr. Thoemke, "Our water, air, and ever changing land-

### Announcement #2

"What do you see when you look at a golf course?

Golfers see a place to enjoy their game and the great outdoor at the same time. Many people see beautiful maintained green areas surrounded by islands of unspoiled natural vegetation and wildlife. And a few see a problem with the environment. These few will tell you that golf courses pollute with fertilizers and pesticides that should be done away with. The truth is these materials are used, by trained, responsible individuals who know what they are doing, and used only in accordance with label instructions approved by the EPA. Established guidelines are strictly followed to insure that the golfers will have a beautiful place to play and the environment is protected. Golf courses are also offer great habitat for numerous wildlife species. Many a school child has enjoyed a field trip to a local golf course where they can see wild animals close up and in their natural environment. So when you drive by or play a golf course in Southwest Florida, know that their owners and managers do take their ecological responsibilities seriously. The Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association just thought you might like to know."



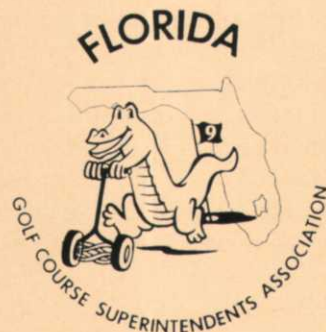


# FGCSA to produce video promoting role of golf course superintendent

The Public Relations Committee of the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, chaired by Darren Davis, presented a proposal to the Executive Committee at the summer 1996 meeting asking for funding to assist in production of a video promoting the role of the golf course superintendent. By a unanimous vote, the proposal was approved.

This video will promote the role of the golf course superintendent, emphasize the importance of the turfgrass industry to the State of Florida, as well as detail the benefits of golf courses to the environment. The video will be formatted in a way that will be entertaining for all audiences. Potential au-

diences will be golfing members, green committees, club presidents, schools and



even members of the press.

By producing this video, the FGCSA will have a tool available for members to use in educating people on the benefits of

turfgrass and golf courses, as well as stressing the importance of having a well-trained, highly qualified superintendent on staff.

The goal of the FGCSA is to provide all members with a copy of this video at no charge and to make additional copies available for purchase at a reasonable price. The script will be written in a way that is non-confrontational and all film footage will be on Florida golf courses.

The FGCSA is excited about the production of this video and the value it will have as an educational tool for superintendents. Look for the video to be available later this year.

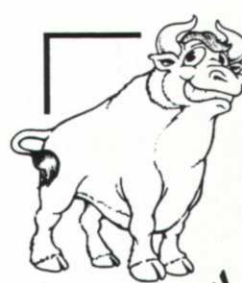
scape, along with the creatures whose habitat is our community all play a part in Florida Outdoors." He added, "Florida Outdoors takes on camping, fishing and all the other recreational activities we enjoy in Collier County."

The announcements were recorded by a professional narrator and read as follows:

The EGCSA recently closed out their books for the 1995 fiscal year and the board voted to fund an additional \$5,000 for public relations. This will include a continuation of the radio announcement on WNOG, as well as a video announcement currently being recorded by the video production company, Epic of Wisconsin.

The EGCSA board hopes to use this video to become a program sponsor for a local television call-in golf show. The video will use wording very similar to the radio announcement and will include footage of local golf courses. As the announcement says, "The Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association just thought you might like to know."

*Editor's note: The FGCSA voted at the Summer '96 Board Meeting in July to fund the production and distribution of the video project. Additionally, Dr. Thoemke has appeared as a speaker at this year's USGA Regional Seminars. Congratulations to Darren and the EGCSA for taking a pro-active leadership role in taking our message to the general public instead of just "preaching to the choir."*



*We got it!*

*El Toro,  
Zoyzia*

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