

## Florida Green Celebrates 25th Anniversary

### Florida GCSA History 101

This issue marks the 25th anniversary of the first appearance of the publication that eventually became *The Florida Green*. A look at the history of the magazine is meaningless without at least a quick look at the history of the association that decided to create such a publication.

The formation of an organized Florida superintendents association began April 22, 1939, when a group of South Florida superintendents met at the urging of then-GCSAA President Joe Ryan who happened to be visiting his daughter in Miami. After a series of informal meetings, an official organizational meeting was held May 13, 1939 at the Hollywood Country Club and the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association was formed.

The first officers were Jimmy Blackledge, president; Clyde Smith, vice president; and Mike Schuyler, secretary/treasurer. A committee was appointed to draft a set of bylaws and the annual dues of \$5 was agreed upon. Regular monthly meetings continued after that and consisted of a business meeting, round table discussions and then lunch and golf. By the July 1939 meeting three directors were added to the board: R.F. Lawrence, B.A. Yoder and Mark Mahannah.

In early 1940 the board discussed expanding the association to a statewide

organization. Responses to a letter sent to all the known superintendents at the time were so meager that the idea was abandoned except for some interest shown by the Tampa - St. Petersburg area superintendents, who founded the West Coast Association in 1949. The

South Florida Golf Course Superintendents also discussed merging with the Florida State Florist Association which was the leading influential horticulture group in the state at the time, and made an application to

join that umbrella group. Attendance at subsequent meetings fluctuated for the fledgling group, especially during the winter seasons. Soon the war years were upon the world and regular meetings were not scheduled, but several meetings were held each year and those members still on the area golf courses got together to discuss mutual problems.

After the war, the association grew steadily with modifications to the structure of the organization and the membership.

In 1961 a group organized as the Georgia-Florida Turfgrass Association which encompassed the North Florida area. The name changed to the Florida-Georgia Turfgrass Association and finally in 1977 to the North Florida GCSA.

In 1968 superintendents in southwest Florida could no longer tolerate the long drives on U. S. 41 to either Tampa or Miami to attend meetings, so they formed the Everglades GCSA and had a joint meeting with the South Florida GCSA in 1969. They played an informal golf

match against each other, an event that blossomed into the Poa Annua Classic.

The 1970s saw the formation of four new local chapters. In 1973-74 the Central Florida GCSA formed in Orlando. The Suncoast GCSA formed in 1976 and the Tri-

County GCSA split from the South Florida GCSA as the region's golf courses numbered close to 300. After some discussions over logical boundaries, it was decided that the South Florida GCSA would reside in Monroe, Dade and Broward counties. By May of '79 the Tri-County changed its name to the Palm Beach GCSA, and the Treasure Coast Chapter formed in July 1980.

During 1978-80 a statewide effort was made to bring all the local associations together as chapters of the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association. In October 1979 the first board of the FGCSA was elected. In the late '80's and early 90's, the Ridge, Seven Rivers and Coastal Plains chapters have been formed for a total of eleven chapters.

Several FGCSA at-large members belong to the Gulf Coast GCSA which is affiliated with the GCSAA. While not currently an official chapter of the FGCSA, this chapter serves superintendents in the western Panhandle, Alabama and Georgia, and supports the IFAS WFREC in Milton.

### The First Publication

Back in 1973 the South Florida GCSA decided to produce a magazine for its members, and in October 1973 the first issue of *The South Florida Green* went into circulation. Here are two excerpts from that inaugural issue:

#### Dedication

To the men who work "behind the scene" in all areas of research, we gratefully dedicate the first issue of *The South Florida Green*.

These men devote most of their time to solving all aspects of turf problems. For their dedicated devotion in making numerous contributions (for which they receive little public credit) The South Florida Superintendents Association members say, "Thank you, gentlemen."

### The First President's Message October 1973

*The South Florida Green is the first publication of The South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association. This Association was organized in July of 1939. Jimmy Blackledge was elected the first President and is still one of the 152 active members.*

*This newsletter will attempt to bring an exchange of ideas, of old and new methods of turf care. Members are encouraged to submit suggestions and*



*The first issue of the South Florida Green, published in October, 1973, had eight pages.*