

## *The Moorings Club*

# Island in the Stream



*Panoramic view of the Indian River lagoon on the par 4, 6th hole is typical on the front nine holes at The Moorings club. Text begins on Page 8.*

*Photo by Daniel Zelazek*



## Island in the Stream

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

When Craig Weyandt was 10 years old, his dad taught him how to mow the yard. When he looked back after his first pass with the mower and saw the neatly cut turf, he felt a sense of accomplishment and it felt good. Thirty-three years later, making sure the grass is cut properly is his job, but he has accomplished a whole lot more.

Weyandt is the golf course superintendent in charge of The Moorings Club, a 75-acre, par-64 gem in a tropical setting along the Indian River in Vero Beach. As Weyandt's turf management experience grew, so did his awareness for his environment. He has become an ambassador for the positive impacts his golf course has made as a wildlife sanctuary and living laboratory for learning about nature. He is a past president of the



*This lake guarding the par 3, 9th hole is part of a nine-lake, 5-acre network which stores stormwater and provides back up irrigation. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*



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**SUPERINTENDENT FACTS**

**Craig Weyandt, CGCS**

**Originally from:** Middleburg  
**Family:** Wife Teri, sons Travis (24) and Connor (14)

**Education:** A.S. in golf operations from Lake City Community College

**Employment:** 2001 to present golf course superintendent, The Moorings Club, Vero Beach; 1991-2001 superintendent, Yacht & CC of Stuart; 1990-1991 assistant superintendent, Harbour Ridge GC Goldem Marsh course, Stuart; 1989 assistant superintendent Bocaire GC, Boca Raton; 1988 Westchester G&CC, Boynton Beach.

**Professional Affiliations:** Member of the GCSAA, FGCSA, USGA, FTGA. Past president of the Treasure Coast GCSA and Florida GCSA. Served on FGCSA, USGA and GCSAA Research committees.

**Goals:** Get The Moorings Club certified in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Become a Florida Master Naturalist. Compete in an Ironman competition.

**Hobbies & Interests:** Surfing, running marathons, triathalons and enjoying nature.



*Craig Weyandt applies a little dab of The Moorings "magic dust" to ball marks and divots. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

turf quality.

"I definitely do more spot treating than ever before," he said. "This includes disease management. I would never have thought to apply a fungicide to just a few greens or even just a spot on a green 10 years ago, but I do today. While I can credit being more environmentally conscious as one reason, on-site experience and overall turf management experience count for a lot. While products have improved, old-school methods of mapping, timing treatments and monitoring, I believe, give much better control and keep down costs."

Being proactive in his management practices means Weyandt must have a good communication plan in place to keep everyone informed of the hows and whys of his programs.

"My most used form of communication is e-mail," Weyandt said. "I relied on email so much that I switched to a Blackberry phone just so I could send and receive e-mails from anywhere. Before the phone, I would have to sit at the computer and read e-mails for what seemed like hours. Now I can monitor my e-mails 24 hours a day. Like anything else, it is a tool that must be managed. The good thing about having access to my e-mails on demand is that it allows me to take care of something much faster than before. I can read mail as it gets to me, rather than reading 20 or 30 each morning.

"I use e-mails to communicate with staff and other departments in letting them know when the course is

Florida GCSA and this past February Weyandt presented an "Innovative Superintendents" session at the GCSAA Conference in New Orleans: How to Organize and Conduct Nature Walks on Your Golf Course.

The Moorings Club is a residential golf community on Orchid Island near

the Gulfstream in the Atlantic Ocean. The property is on the eastern shore of the Indian River with most of the front nine comprising a peninsula jutting into the river offering dramatic waterfront views. Because of this sensitive location Weyandt has learned to minimize inputs while maintaining



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closed and why, whether for maintenance or rainfall, I want the staff to know as soon as possible the course is closed. If it is because of rainfall, I include the amount. I just know that a member is going to ask someone, "How much rain did we get?" and I would like staff to have the answer.

"Member outreach and education is primarily done through the club's newsletter and Audubon Tours. I have two columns in our newsletter, "The Porthole," that goes out to all the members. One is called "Turf Talk" and the other is "Wild at Heart."

"Turf Talk is used to explain the common and not-so-common maintenance practices. For

example, 'what is a soap flush? What pesticides or plant protectants are we using and why? Where does our irrigation water come from?' and so on.

"Wild at Heart features a brief description of a different plant or animal each month and how it relates to the golf course and some cool facts. For example, 'Did you know that Ospreys are either right taloned or left taloned, just like humans are right or left handed?' I always want these articles to be positive and educational. We never dwell on negatives or why the third green is brown. This newsletter goes to the entire membership, not just the golfers. Problems are discussed person to person

## ELIMINATE GUESSWORK WHEN SPRING FEEDING

Spring fertilization varies greatly on a number of factors. Cultural practices performed, soil amendments made, irrigation and drainage upgrades, fertilizers applied, and what happened last fall plays a significant role with this season's success. However, having a sound fertility program will provide you with your best chance of success for the upcoming season.

Typically, spring applications are applied after the early flush of shoot growth has occurred, but predicting spring weather can be a challenge when it comes to soil and air temperature, and precipitation. That's why choosing a fertilizer that performs in cool climates is so vital.



Steve Jacques  
Regional Mgr/T&O Sales  
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Coated products are a great example of fertilizers that don't offer immediate plant nutrition and are subject to leaching once the protective coating breaks down.

Still other products rely on a process called mineralization, depending on soil microbes to break down nitrogen. Whereas soil microbes aren't fully active until the soil temperature reaches 55 degrees – which might not happen until late spring depending on the region – UMAXX begins working immediately and is not dependent on soil temperature for nitrogen release.

Although fine-tuning a spring fertilization program varies on many factors, its importance will be felt all summer long and even into the fall. The benefit of using an all-weather, long-lasting performer such as UMAXX provides immediate benefits, as well as a positive long-term impact. UMAXX gives the freedom to apply as a nitrogen component in a blend or part of a soluble fertilizer program. UMAXX offers consistent performance regardless of temperature or application type.

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with board members.”

Weyandt explained how he is addressing a number of issues that face the golf and turf industries in Florida.

First on tap is water availability, use and conservation and irrigation management.

“Our water source is effluent. We have a contract with the city of Vero Beach to provide us with effluent water but I know that is no guarantee. In 2003 we did some course renovations which included rebuilding the greens. Since the course was going to be closed for the summer, I presented two other projects to take advantage of the course closure. The projects were a long-range landscape plan and a master drainage plan. The landscape included removing all of the exotic species (primarily Australian pine) and replacing with native (sabal palm, green buttonwood, gumbo limbo, etc.).

“The master drainage plan included routing as much drainage and other

runoff as possible into the irrigation holding pond and installing a pipe with a flapper gate connecting the irrigation holding pond to all other ponds. This tie-in gives me a little comfort in knowing that I am not just connected to a 2-acre pond but rather a 5-acre system. That means we can store more storm water and avoid discharges to tide and course flooding.

“Daily watering schedules are done with a Rainbird Maxi Cirrus controller with some local knowledge tweaking. Like everyone else we constantly watch the weather. One thought that always rings through my head when setting up irrigation cycles is that I read a long time ago that the number-two cause of golf course decline is over-watering.

“For the future, I am writing documentation for the long range planning committee putting dates or years on when things like controllers, pipe and the pump station should be replaced. This will make it much easier

for the board to plan and budget for future needs of the club and keep the system as efficient as possible.”

Most recent fertilizer ordinances around the state have sections directing golf courses to abide by the nutrient management guidelines in the *2007 Golf BMP Manual*. Homeowners are being restricted in their fertilizer usage and golf courses need to make sure they are voluntarily abiding by the BMPs to set a good example.

“I haven’t had to make many changes in fertilizer practices since coming to The Moorings Club,” Weyandt said. “Most of the changes had happened when I got here. I remember having three or four tons of fertilizer on hand when I arrived on property and saying, ‘I’m not applying the fertilizer until I can see a reduction in color or growth response.’ It took about four months before I noticed enough change to warrant putting the fertilizer out.

“I believe we do get a small amount

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## COVER STORY

### FUN FACTS

**Vehicle:** Ford F-150

**The last good movie I saw:** Marley & Me

**I stay home to watch:** Fuel TV

**The book I've been reading:** Runners World

**Favorite meal:** Splash and Meadow

**Prized possessions:** Family

**Personal heroes:** Parents

**Favorite performers:** All the workers at Hospice

**Nobody knows that I:** Chewed tobacco for 17 years

**I'm better than anyone else when it comes to:** Copying others, for I have no natural talent

**If I could do it over:** I would have never started chewing tobacco

**I'd give anything to meet:** My parents again

**My fantasy is:** Peace

**The one thing I can't stand:**

Is a small bar of soap

**If I could change one thing about myself:** I would like to be able to focus better

**My most irrational act:**

Screaming like a little kid on a ride at Disney

**Most humbling experience:**

Being a father

**My dream foursome would be:** Tiger, My father, and sons Travis and Conner.

*(But Craig, that's a fivesome)*

**My best fish story:** My son and I were splashed by jumping spinner sharks while surfing.

**My most amazing, lucky, important golf shot:** I thought no one saw me hit that house.



*Craig Weyandt challenges himself to succeed by competing in marathons.*

of useful nutrients with the effluent. Combined with our heavy soils, nutrients tend to hang around longer and aren't subject to leaching. We have all but removed supplemental phosphorus from the turf diet and I haven't seen any ill effects. I still put out two or three tanks of liquid fertilizer though the irrigation system in the winter, depending on temperatures.

"One change in our

program that will reduce how much we fertilize this year is the club's decision to not overseed. This was a conscious decision by the green committee and the board of governors to save money and concentrate on weed control. With no seed in the way this year, we can reduce our overall winter fertilizer bill and try to reduce our Poa annua population. There have also been many savings so far like labor and fuel,





The "seasides," as Weyandt calls these waste bunkers, can be temporary water hazards in the early fall due to warm water, high tides and prevailing winds. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

but I am most excited about zero transition in the spring. Revolver® has made transition so much easier, but I'm looking forward to spot-controlling Poa and volunteer rye rather than large broadcast treatments and waiting for Mother Nature to do the rest.

"I definitely do more spot-treating than ever before. It just makes sense to not waste the time, labor and dollars on unnecessary applications. Mole crickets still amaze me. Just when we thought we had the silver bullet, those little critters still find a way to drive me crazy. I remember hearing, 'Don't worry about your greens, the TifEagle is too

tight and they don't like it.' Well, they still eat it all the same and damage is even more noticeable. Our cup changer carries a mixture of lemon joy and water each day. If he sees tunneling damage it's treated as soon as possible. We focus on mapping our problem areas and concentrate on controlling them before they can spread.

"Primo® remains a vital tool in our turf management program. It has helped me get through droughts and the wet season as well. I like using it most in the wet season. We try to time our application before major storm events, in case we receive a lot of rain.



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## THE MOORINGS CLUB



*The Moorings Club Golf Maintenance Staff*

**Location:** Vero Beach, Fla.

**Ownership:** Member Owned. Average rounds per year: 22,000

**Number of Holes:** 18; Yardage: 4,338 yards; Par 64; Slope/Rating: 109 / 61.7

**Designed by:** Pete Dye, opened: 1971

**Management Team:** Club President Tony Calderone; Green Chairman David Drury; Clubhouse Manager Craig Lopes; Executive Chef Michael Lander; Director of Fitness Kim Palmer; Head Golf Professional Tom Thornton; Tennis Pro: Donna Roup; Superintendent Craig Weyandt, CGCS.

**Major renovations/Ongoing projects:** 2003 Greens renovation by Barbaron, Inc.; 2004 Hurricane renovation (new trees, repair greens and driving range netting); 2005 Hurricane renovations (repair tees, bunkers, cart paths and new driving range netting system).

**Total acreage:** 75. Turf acreage under maintenance: 70

**Greens:** TifEagle; avg. size 5,500 sq.ft, 2.5 acres; HOC winter .125", summer .140"; green speed goal: 8.5 – 9.5 year round. Overseeding: none

**Tees, Fairways and Roughs:** hybrid bermudagrass. Tees 2.0 acres, HOC .50", overseed with 6 lbs/1,000 sq. ft. Poa trivialis. Fairways 17 acres, HOC .50". Roughs 32 acres, HOC 1.75". Fairways overseeded with 400 lbs/A with ryegrass, overseeded with rye at 300 lbs/A.

**Bunkers:** 46; type GA-26 sand, machine raked with Toro Sand Pro.

**Native areas:** 2 acres of waste areas called "Seasides." They are raked with a Smithco to maintain habitat for fiddler crabs.

**Waterways:** 9 lakes, 6 acres. As of Jan. 1, maintained in house, assistant superintendent has an aquatics pesticide license. Changing maintenance program and adding aquatic plants.

**Irrigation:** reclaimed water; Flowtronics PSI 2,000 GPM pump station, Rainbird Maxi - Cirrus controller, 750 heads at roughly 70-ft. spacing. Fertigation and Diamond K gypsum injector.

**Water management, conservation practices:** Remote, solar powered, wireless weather station to measure and replace moisture lost by turf by evapotranspiration.

**Staff:** 16 including superintendent (14 full time, 2 part time).

**Key maintenance staff members:** Assistant Supt. Scott Campbell; Equipment Technician Andrew Dawson; Pest Control Technician Carl Carter; Irrigation Technician Keith Pater; Forman Jose Morales; Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Rodriguez.

Then I know the turf is not growing out of control while the mowers sit idle waiting for things to dry out. We backed off using it on the greens at certain times of the year. We had several occasions where it was used and poor turf performance followed. Primo was stopped and conditions improved. While I do not know for sure if the two were connected, we use it wisely."

### BUDGETING

"Like many others we were asked to cut budgets this year," he said. "We have looked long and hard at each line item and have made a few changes. Contract aerification was one area we reduced. This year we plan to conduct all fairway and tee aerifications in-house. We will contract a deep drill in August but we will do all other aerifications. Our large aerifier is a spoon-tine aerifier. This unit does not go as deep but I believe for a year it can be effective enough at relieving compaction and decreasing the biomass in the upper root zone. It can be more disruptive. Instead of the normal straight up and down holes, the spoon tine is going to make elongated craters and take longer to heal over.

"With fertilizer so expensive, we may try to run a little lean this year, and shopping and complete bidding are a must. Just how far I can stretch applications is yet to be seen

"Labor, the largest item in the budget, is sometimes the last to be considered. I have promised the staff I will keep them posted if any changes need to be made but to definitely be prepared for overtime cutbacks. This is done primarily on weekends. For example we may stop walkmowing earlier this year and begin triplexing. This may only reduce one man on weekends but those are all overtime hours. I hope to have a full staff during the season, but we may not replace positions immediately in the summer."

Finally, I asked Weyandt about his years of service to his chapter and the FGCSA.

"Association volunteering has made me a better listener. In order to work together with people, you have to hear what they are saying and try to



**Association volunteering has made me a better listener. In order to work together with people, you have to hear what they are saying and try to understand their position... Empathize if possible. I also encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zone... get out and be active.**

understand their position. Empathize if possible. Trust me: this is very difficult for a person with ADHD. I would always want to get my opinion in and want to be heard but I have also learned to listen.

“I also encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zone; whether it is volunteering for your association, your church, community, local school, etc., get out and be active. Do you want someone else making all the decisions for you? Maybe you might

want to take an active role in the world around you. Has golf given you a good life? Have you given back? How have you contributed to making your profession or job better?

“I believe that everyone has the ability to achieve but one must first have the desire. Set a goal (desire) and then make a road map on how to achieve success. Sounds funny, but that’s how it all begins.

*Continues on Page 20*

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“A year ago I was challenged to step out of my comfort zone and reach for an athletic goal that I thought was unachievable. That goal was a half-Ironman race (1.2 mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run). I accepted the challenge first by writing it down on paper. I had to put it in my own words and keep it somewhere to remind me of my personal challenge to myself. That was the first step, accepting the challenge. Then I made a training plan and stuck to it (the second step).

“I’m happy to say that I achieved my goal on Oct. 25, 2008 by completing The Florida Challenge half-Ironman in Clermont (6 hours, 14 minutes). Trust me. You get a far greater feeling in life of being alive by having someone put a medal around your neck for completing a goal, or hanging a plaque on the wall for your time and service than you do by sitting at home watching TV.

“So get out there and achieve!”



*The 18th green is framed by the new clubhouse complex rebuilt after being damaged by the 2004 Hurricanes. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

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