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VICE PRESIDENT Ricky Reeves
Miami Beach GC
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Miami Beach, FL 33140
305-673-7000

SEC/TREAS John Curran
John's Island Club
5802 87th Street
Sebastian, FL 32958
772-231-8623

PAST PRESIDENT Bill Davidson, CGCS
Country Club of Naples
185 Burning Tree Ln
Naples, FL 34109
239-593-4125

DIRECTORS

CALUSA Mark Thomas
Kelly Greens Golf & Country Club
239-466-3201

CENTRAL FLORIDA RICKEY CRAIG
ROSEN SHINGLE CREEK
407-996-9800

EVERGLADES Aaron Ohloff
Wyndemere Country Club
239-263-0022

NORTH FLORIDA Michael Stevens
Billy Casper Golf
904-940-8218

PALM BEACH Steve Wright, CGCS
Pine Tree Golf Club
561-734-9688

RIDGE Tyler Green
Southern Dunes Golf and Country Club
863-421-4653

SEVEN RIVERS Andy Jorgensen, CGCS
On Top of the World
352-237-9564

SOUTH FLORIDA Rolando Molina
Country Club of Miami
305-725-2381

SUN COAST Nick Kearns
The Oaks Club
941-966-6523

TREASURE COAST John Curran
John's Island Club
772-231-8623

WEST COAST Andy Neiswender
Belleair Country Club
727-443-2127

STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Jennifer Bryan
PO Box 65
Jensen Beach, FL 34958
772-334-7515; 800-732-6053 (FL)
fgcsa@comcast.net

EDITOR TRENT BOUTS
Tee Media Consulting
103 Scattershot Lane
Greer, SC 29650
864-414-3123
trentb@charter.net



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Story ideas, news tips or comments? Please let us know at: trentb@charter.net

PUBLICATIONS CHAIR

Ricky Reeves
Miami Beach GC
2301 Alton Rd.
Miami Beach, FL 32140
305-673-7000

EDITORS EMERITI

Dan Jones, CGCS
Oviedo, FL

Joel Jackson, CGCS Retired
Sherman Oaks, CA

We're Making Great Strides With Much More to Come

The summer season is fast approaching and will provide us the opportunity to relieve stress on our turf from a busy golfing season. Many clubs have been reporting record rounds of golf which is wonderful news for the financial health of those clubs and for the game itself. However, that much golfer traffic can be detrimental to the health of the turf. That's where our expertise, judgment and experience hold the key.

Accordingly, there will be many conversations at local chapter events focused on how many days to close the golf course, how many times you should aerify and what size tines you should use. I appreciate the variety of ideas shared by both veterans of the industry, as well as the new breed of turf managers who have embraced social media and are willing to share ideas and solutions.

Never has there been such ready access to so much information and opinions. Tweets, blogs and online forums generate a wealth of rapid fire information that is easily accessible for all. Whether you choose to use social media, call on a phone or have a face-to-face conversation with a peer you met at a chapter meeting, you should never be short of ideas.

That willingness to share the lessons of our victories as well as our defeats to help our colleagues is a hallmark of this profession. Sometimes those lessons have little to do with turfgrass.

The story in the winter issue of The Florida Green on Tyler Green from Southern Dunes Golf and Country Club was an important and inspirational one. It was brave of Tyler to be so open and honest about his struggles with the pressures of the job. I know many of his colleagues face similar situations and I commend him for putting the subject on the table and offering some solutions.

I also offer a big pat on the back to those superintendents and their teams that did such a fantastic job during the PGA Tour's Florida Swing in February and March. While the vast majority of us will never experience the privilege of hosting a Tour event, it is inspiring for us to see colleagues producing such excellent conditions on what is a world stage. Whether we're preparing our own course for a member-guest tournament or a club championship, all of us have felt those butterflies that come from putting your pride and passion on show.

That sense of shared experience, no matter what the scale, is something that binds us in this profession. That was clearly on display at our annual Florida GCSA reception at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego, CA in February. The Wednesday night event had a tremendous turnout and filled the venue with conversations from across the State. It was an energizing event for everyone.

The reception was just one more burst of momentum for our association which is making great strides in a host of areas. You can expect to see a new website very soon with much greater capacity to serve the needs of individual members and each of the local chapters. That comes on the back of your new-look magazine and much more. That's the good news.

The better news is that there still much more to come. ■



David Dore-Smith



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Meetings do Matter As a Matter of Fact



Jennifer Bryan

The late John Kenneth Galbraith was pretty smart. A celebrated economist, he taught at Harvard and also served as the U.S. ambassador to India. He once said that “meetings are indispensable...when you don’t want to do anything.” It’s important to note here that Galbraith had a sense of humor and I get the joke.

As your executive director I spend a lot of time in meetings, a lot of time. Sometimes it can feel like you’re not actually getting anything done because you’re not at the computer. But as Galbraith clearly knew, some business just has to be done in person. That’s why ambassadors actually go to live in the country they are appointed to deal with.

My “ambassadorship” on behalf of the Florida GCSA has involved some significant meetings recently. First, there was Florida Golf Day in Tallahassee early February where golf gets to tell its economic and environmental story to legislators face to face.

Then I was in San Diego, CA for the Golf Industry Show – the profession’s biggest meeting. During GIS we hosted a very well-attended Florida GCSA annual reception. Each year we strive to provide an environment where new and old friends and colleagues can catch up. We succeeded again this year by returning to a familiar location at the Hotel Palomar.

There is nothing better than observing members interact so genuinely while enjoying a great venue, food and atmosphere. The weather was outstanding and the rooftop bar was a spectacular setting. Based on conversations with superintendents, it appears most prefer a Wednesday night event over Thursday night. I look forward to hearing more feedback and encourage your comments.

After GIS, I attended the Southeast Florida Coastal Ocean Task Force’s Save Our Reefs presentation at Indian River College in Stuart. The task force recommends that local governments and municipalities along the southeast coast from Martin County southward adopt policies to protect the reefs. Two of their recommendations were specific to golf; one would require golf courses to attain a Green Club Certification and the other would further regulate fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and pesticides. In response I submitted a letter on behalf of our association in opposition to these recommendations since our Golf BMP Certification Program already addresses these.

I also requested those members who live in this area to submit comments as well. Thank you to all of you who participated. In addition, the Florida GCSA signed a letter with other industry stakeholders reiterating our message. I will continue to monitor developments and will communicate any changes.

There is a lot happening on the regulatory front. Early March, the City of Marco Island voted to regulate the use of fertilizers based on the Model Ordinance for Florida Friendly Fertilizer Use to include a rainy season blackout June 1 through September 30. Alachua County is drafting changes to their fertilizer ordinance and the City of Miami Beach is looking into a glyphosate ban (Roundup). We are using our coalition power to address these drafts using practical science. We have our ear to the ground and will continue to spread our message.

Also in March I attended the Florida Turfgrass Association board meeting in Lakeland. Like the Florida GCSA board of directors, this is another group of dedicated turf professionals. Our relationships with other associations across the industry are important. Our unified voice often carries a stronger message.

And finally, as I mentioned in the winter issue, please watch for the roll out of our new website and membership database. I will be visiting your chapter soon to demonstrate all it has to offer. I look forward to your feedback at those meetings, which are in fact “indispensable” means of keeping us together so we can indeed get many things done. ■

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WEST COAST



USGA Green Section agronomist Todd Lowe speaks to West Coast GCSA members at Palm Ceia Golf and Country Club.

The West Coast GCSA is on a path to reinvigorate the association as a stand-alone entity after trial merger with the Suncoast GCSA. Officials expect to introduce a slate of new talent at the association's annual elections and business meeting at East Lake Woodlands Country Club in Oldsmar in June.

President Kevin Sunderman from Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club has one more year to run on his term but all other positions on the board are expected to turnover. Sunderman says the association will accept nominations right up to the meeting itself.

"We thought that bringing the two associations together would benefit members and increase the volunteer pool," Sunderman says. "We tried it for about two and a half years and for whatever reason it didn't quite catch on. Whether it was the longer drive to some meetings, job turnover in the area, or we didn't do a good job of promoting the change, who really knows? But it seemed like it diluted engagement."

By contrast, association leaders were encouraged by a strong turnout to their first solo meeting post-merger in March. Nearly 70 people attended the education-only event at Palm Ceia Golf and Country Club in South Tampa where Carson Kamps was host superintendent. Sunderman says there were about 40 superintendents and assistant superintendents there to hear

presentations by the USGA Green Section's Todd Lowe and Steve Kammerer.

That event, like the annual meeting and a hickory stick event in April, was open to all area superintendents, regardless of whether they are West Coast GCSA members or not. "We're trying to breathe new life back into the area," Sunderman says. "We're reaching out to individuals by phone and feel like we are gaining some momentum."

The hickory stick event is set for April 27 at Largo Golf Course in Largo where Gerald Marquardt is superintendent. The association is renting 36 sets of hickory shafted clubs for the event which will be contested by two-man teams sharing one set.

The annual meeting is on June 14 at East Lake Woodlands where Mickey Subotic is superintendent. The meeting will be followed by a golf tournament.

SUNCOAST

The annual Suncoast Scramble is right around the corner with this year's tournament at The Oaks Club in Osprey on May 16. Host superintendent for what always proves to be the biggest event on the association's calendar is Nick Kearns.

The Suncoast GCSA board of directors sincerely appreciates of all those sponsors whose support helps provide services to members and to fund worthwhile projects,

including scholarships for deserving turfgrass students, junior golf programs and turfgrass research.

Multiple sponsorship opportunities are open at the Suncoast Scramble which begins with a business meeting followed by a presentation from Henry DeLozier of Global Golf Advisors. After lunch the field will head out for a shotgun start at noon. A portion of this year's proceeds will be donated to All Faiths Food Bank.

Kearns says, "All levels of support are welcome, whether it is as a player on a team, vendor sponsor, or a contributor to our raffle." Register at <http://suncoastscramble2016.eventbrite.com>. Deadline is April 22.

Congratulations from the Suncoast GCSA to Sean O'Brien from The Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club on recently attaining his certification with GCSAA.

SEVEN RIVERS

The Seven Rivers GCSA December monthly meeting was at Adena Golf and Country Club with host superintendent Asa High. More than 100 attendees enjoyed a presentation by Bayer's Dr. Derek Settle on proper mixing order and chemistry.



Asa High

In January, Ridge GCSA president Ron Palsgrove hosted a full meeting at Arlington Ridge, with guest speaker Melissa Barron from Syngenta. Melissa gave an outstanding presentation on reading labels and pollinator health during applications.

February's meeting was at Golden Ocala Golf and Equestrian Club with host superintendent Jack Creveling. Jack had the golf course in excellent condition while

guest speaker Steve Loveday from Residex Turfgrass gave a unique presentation on selecting the proper foliar nutrition for putting greens.

April 18 marks the return of the Jeff Hayden Envirotron Golf Classic at World Woods Golf Club. This event has raised more than \$1 million for turfgrass research since its inception. Stay tuned for more on this in the next issue.

-Andy Jorgensen, CGCS

RIDGE



Mike Giddens

More than 60 Ridge GCSA members and vendors received some important perspectives on their financial futures at the association's first event of the year. A local financial

planning consultant discussed everything from life insurance to retirement planning, living wills to estate planning and more. The subject matter was prompted by the sudden death last year of Ridge GCSA and Florida Turfgrass Association past-president Alan Puckett.

"We lost a very good friend last year," Ridge GCSA president Mike Giddens from

YMCA Par 3 and First Tee in Lakeland says. "That made some of us take note of our own situations. We all know that our finances are very important but for some of us we don't necessarily make them a priority. Of course by the time they become a priority it can be too late."

Giddens says superintendents typically do an excellent job keeping their golf operation in sound financial order. "But we work long hours and sometimes the household things that we should have in place aren't always completely taken care of," he says. "Over the years we have all seen situations where families need help sorting things out and taking care of expenses after they've lost someone unexpectedly. It was the first time we had done anything quite like that, having a financial consultant speak, but the feedback was very positive."

The event at Lone Palm Golf Club in Lakeland was hosted by Mike Caudill.

Adam Ellison will host the annual fundraising tournament, the Ridge Invitational, at Grasslands Golf and Country Club in Lakeland on May 26. Four-person teams will compete in an 18-hole par three event with prizes for individuals and teams. A cash prize is on offer for a hole-in-one on every hole. There will also be a putting contest where one person will qualify for a chance to putt for a \$2,500 prize. Later in the day four players will have a chance to win \$50,000 in the Ridge Shootout.

CALUSA

More than 30 people attended the Calusa GCSA's social bowling event at Gator Lanes in Fort Myers in March. Association president Mark Jacobs from Shell Point Golf Club says a combined bowling and bingo competition provided plenty of entertainment. Jacobs was unable to bowl because of a persistent neck and shoulder issue but he did serve as photographer.

The next event on the calendar is the annual Ryder Cup-style challenge against the Suncoast GCSA at Verandah Golf Club hosted by vice-president Jake Wentz. A baseball event is being scheduled for July. For a detailed review of the Calusa GCSA's charitable involvement with the Children's Network of Southwest Florida see page...

NORTH FLORIDA

The North Florida GCSA will once again give \$5,000 to the Florida GCSA turfgrass research fund after another successful fundraiser. A full field of 84 golfers teed off in the annual Research Tournament at Pablo Creek Golf Club in Jacksonville. Host superintendent Al Clements and assistant superintendent Joey Finchbaugh did a wonderful job. Lunch was sponsored by Brent Holmes of Harrells and beverages by Chris McCranie of Upstart Products.

At press time, the chapter was preparing for the annual Memorial Scholarship Tournament at LPGA International in

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Daytona Beach with John Lammrish host superintendent. Then on May 16 the chapter has its first Skins and Fins Benevolent Tournament that combines golf with fishing on every hole at Crane Lakes Golf and Country Club in Port Orange. The field for the four-person scramble is capped at 72 and all proceeds will go to the chapter's benevolent fund.

Another new format follows on June 11 with the first annual Inshore Fishing Tournament in St. Augustine. This year's annual meeting is at St. John's Golf and Country Club, also in St. Augustine, on June 18.

PALM BEACH

The Palm Beach GCSA began the year by extending its tradition of bringing in a superintendent from a high-profile out-of-state facility as a guest speaker. In January, Kevin Robinson, CGCS from Pinehurst No. 2 spoke to nearly 60 Palm Beach GCSA members at a superintendents-only golf and dinner event at Eastpointe

Country Club in Palm Beach. Robinson helped oversee the extensive restoration of Donald Ross-designed No. 2 and the historic back-to-back U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open in 2014.

Others who have spoken at the event in recent years include Ken Mangum, CGCS who oversaw PGA Championships in 2011 and 2001 and the U.S. Women's Open Championship in 1990 at Atlanta Athletic Club. Curtis Tyrell, CGCS who hosted the 2012 Ryder Cup at Medinah Country Club has also spoken at the event.

Chapter president Shannon Wheeler from Wycliffe Golf and Country Club says all three have given their time to make the trips. The Palm Beach GCSA covers travel expenses. "It's very good of Kevin and the other guys to donate their time like that," Wheeler says. "It's another example of what sets our profession aside from some others."

One significant shift in tradition coming up is a new location for this year's

Future of Golf Tournament. After a decade or so at Falls Country Club with Steve Pearson, CGCS playing host, this year's event will be Eastpointe Country Club on June 4. John Spiwak will be host superintendent, helping out when Falls Country Club became unavailable because of a construction project.

The chapter is also finalizing details for a marathon golf event with the Seminole Chapter of the Club Managers Association of America.

TREASURE COAST

Thousands of people of all ages from the Vero Beach community benefited from the Treasure Coast GCSA's support of the 20th annual EcoFest Family Celebration at the Environmental Learning Center in March. Organizers said there was "record attendance" at the 64-acre island preserve. The day was filled with fat-tire bicycles, canoe rides through the mangroves, hands-on exhibits, live music and more.

"The day went really well," Treasure Coast GCSA president Matt Boyd from Orchid Island Golf and Beach Club says. "It was about a five-hour event and we had board members attend in two shifts so we had a presence all day. It was great exposure for our association and the work that we do as superintendents."

The Treasure Coast GCSA was the event's premier sponsor. The \$15,000 backing was far from the first time the chapter has supported the ELC. That support has also included volunteer labor and expertise to repair a thatched roof at the center's pavilion area.

In other news, the chapter generated considerable support for Toys for Tots at the annual Christmas party at Gator Trace Golf and Country Club in Fort Pierce. "We are very grateful to host superintendent, head pro, general manager and owner Lantie Hughes," Boyd says. "He helped us out with a location when we had to make a change at the last moment. He does a great job and everyone appreciated his hospitality, including the fact that he let carts on the golf course on a day when many facilities would have been closed."

Toys were forwarded to the St. Lucie County's Sherriff's Department Christmas Toy Drive.

Registration is open for the 23rd annual Blue Pearl Charity Golf Tournament set for May 16 at John's Island Club's West course. This major fundraiser has helped numerous aspects of the community since its inception including multiple school districts. Registration deadline is May 9.

The Treasure Coast GCSA is looking for volunteers for next year's board of



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directors. “We are always in need of new ideas and leadership to move the association forward,” Boyd says. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Boyd or another board member in advance of the annual meeting in June. With the help of Rob Kloska at Jupiter Island Club, the chapter will also present an event for assistant superintendents on June 16.

EVERGLADES

Motivational humor was on the menu along with great food at the Everglades GCSA education and dinner event at The Club Pelican Bay in Naples in March. Author, TV personality and professional motivator Darryl Ross was guest speaker in a real change of pace that generated positive feedback from members.

“After the season we’ve had with the weather we thought it might be an idea to bring in a comedian and just laugh for an hour,” Everglades GCSA president Bryce Koch from Cypress Lake Country Club says. “In the end we found someone who was able to provide a really upbeat presentation on work-life balance and leadership. Darryl did all that and more and we had some fun.”

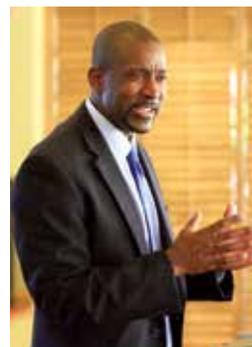
Koch says the alternative to a traditional turfgrass education topic was a “refreshing move outside the box.” In researching to find the right speaker, Koch interviewed several candidates provided by GigMasters. He settled on Ross who he says is “truly an entertainer at heart with a passion for people and service.”



Some of the crowd at The Club Pelican Bay.

There is more conventional education on the slate at this year’s Spring Symposium at Naples Beach Hotel on April 21. Koch says education committee chair Matt Taylor, CGCS from Royal Poinciana Golf Club has put together “another all-star lineup of speakers and presenters.” The schedule includes leading industry speakers from Michigan State University, University of Florida, University of Arkansas, University of Tennessee and North Carolina State University. “Matt does a great job with this every year and there are a lot of CEUs available once again,” Koch says.

Then on May 12 to 14 the Everglades hosts the annual Poa Annuu Golf Classic and G.C. Horn Memorial Tournament. This year’s event is at Marriott Resort Marco Island with the G.C. Horn tournament on the Friday at Hammock Bay Golf and Country Club. For the Poa the following day golfers can either compete in a four-man scramble at The Rookery at Marco



Speaker Darryl Ross was a hit with a mix of knowledge and humor.



Everglades GCSA president Bryce Koch welcomes diners to the event at The Club Pelican Bay.

or an individual stroke play format at Hammock Bay. Hosts this year are Todd Evans, director of golf grounds, and Stuart Wiseley, golf course superintendent.

“We also have the best event of the weekend, the Luau,” Koch says. “I hope to see all your family and friends there joining us for a festive time on the beach.” Koch says the new venue comes about because of construction at long-time host facility Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club where Kirsten Conover is superintendent.



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FLORIDA MAKES POSITIVE MARK ON GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW IN CA



Bryce Koch from Cypress Lake Country Club lines up a putt with the Pacific Ocean in the background.

The Florida GCSA made its mark at this year's Golf Industry Show in San Diego, CA winning elections and golf events and helping point the next generation of superintendents in the right direction. Members also celebrated in style with about 250 turning out for the association's annual reception, at the Hotel Palomar in San Diego's historic Gaslamp Quarter.

Florida GCSA past-president Darren Davis, CGCS from Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples was elected GCSAA's secretary-treasurer at the association's annual meeting. Davis, who has been at Olde Florida since 1992, was also appointed the board of trustees for the Environmental Institute for Golf, GCSAA's philanthropic arm. There he joins Rafael Barajas, CGCS from Boca Grove Plantation and Country Club, who had also run for secretary-treasurer and remains on the GCSAA board.

Davis is serving his fifth year on the GCSAA board of directors and has wealth of experience in volunteer service to the profession. He is a past-president of the Everglades GCSA and Florida Turfgrass Association. He is currently a director with the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation. In 2004, he received the



Darren Davis, CGCS



Florida GCSA president David Dore-Smith speaks to international interns from Ohio State University's global intern program during the Golf Industry Show.

Florida GCSA's Distinguished Service Award and in 2011 the Florida TA presented Davis with the Wreath of Grass - the association's highest award.

Florida GCSA's current president David Dore-Smith from Copperleaf Golf Club was front and center mid-week as the keynote speaker at an event for an international group of prospective superintendents. Dore-Smith spoke to about 40 interns from Ohio State University's Global Intern Program. An Australian, Dore-Smith is himself a graduate of that program.



Jeff Hiday of FIS Outdoor won the 50/50 drawing, Dr. Matt Brecht of Syngenta won the surfboard presented by Florida GCSA president David Dore-Smith.



Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club leaves the green on his way to a tie for third in the national championship.



Seth Strickland from Miami Shores Country Club eyes a shot from the fairway.

The event at the Grand Hyatt Hotel was presented in partnership with Syngenta and also included brief talks from GCSAA president Peter Grass, past-president John O'Keefe, CGCS and chief executive officer Rhett Evans.

Show week began with a strong performance by Florida GCSA members in the national golf championship at Aviara Golf Club and Resort and the South Course at Torrey Pines. Florida won the national team championship thanks to the efforts of Jason Bagwell from Gleneagles Country Club, Bryce Koch from Cypress Lake Country Club, Seth Strickland from Miami Shores Country Club, Scott Tullis from Jacaranda West Country Club and Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club. They combined to score a clear victory in the 27-team field.

Zendt was also in the running to win his second national individual championship. He led by two shots after an opening round 72 and shared the lead until the 12th hole of the second round at Torrey Pines which hosted the PGA Tour's Farmers Insurance Open the week before. There he made a double-bogey while eventual winner Shawn Westacott from Maridoe Golf

Club in Texas managed bogey. He would drop another five shots to par over the next three holes, eventually losing by three to finish in a tie for third.

Strickland returned rounds of 77 and 81 to finish ninth nine shots behind the winner. Koch was a further stroke behind in a tie for 10th giving the Florida GCSA three top 10 finishers.

For all the above, the biggest highlight of the week for many was the annual reception. Many attendees responded positively to the Wednesday evening time slot instead of the usual Thursday timing. All kinds of tales, true and tall, were shared around the bar and pool of Hotel Palomar's rooftop outdoor deck. A raffle on the night raised close to \$1,000 for the Florida GCSA benevolent. A custom Timothy Bessell surfboard was won by Dr. Matt Brecht of Syngenta. Jeff Hiday of FIS Outdoor won \$900 in the 50/50 drawing.

The reception at next year's Golf Industry Show is likely to be far bigger still when GIS returns to Orlando and the Orange County Convention Center from February 4 to 9. ■

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Faces from the Florida GCSA Reception



Tim Orton of Koch Agronomic Services and Tommy Alex from Grand Cypress Golf Club.



Ralph Brennan of Beard Equipment.



Nick Kearns from The Oaks Club and Zach Lane from Laurel Oak Country Club take care of raffle tickets.



Mark Jacobs from Shell Point Golf Club.



Jim Colo from Naples National Golf Club, Andy Kjos, CGCS from Trump International Golf Club and Nick Verri of Rain Bird.



Mark Reid from The Breakers Hotel and Breakers West.



James Kenny of Florida Superior Sand, Paul Mollberg from Cedar Hammock Golf and Country Club, T. J. Shine from Herons Glen Golf Club and Mike Wallace from Naples Lakes Country Club.



Scott Tullis from Jacaranda West Country Club.



Jay Boring from Carol Ridge Country Club and wife, Carolina.



Joel Jackson, CGCS retired and GCSAA director Rafael Barajas, CGCS now at Boca Grove Plantation and Country Club.



Al Hicks of East Coast Equipment Consultants and Paul Crawford of Ameriturf.



Jason Zimmerman, CGCS from Pelican's Nest Golf Club.

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The bald eagle that farewelled regulators as they finished up their tour. (Photo: Kyle Sweet, CGCS)



Todd Draffen's assistant superintendent Isaac Sental demonstrates walk-mowing.

Bald Eagle Visit Impresses REGULATORS AT OLD COLLIER

A regal appearance by a bald eagle with an impeccable sense of timing was among the highlights of a tour by governmental regulators at Old Collier Golf Club in Naples in March. The eagle perched on a favorite snag as dozens of visitors wrapped up the annual Florida Spring Regulatory Tour hosted by Old Collier's director of agronomy Todd Draffen.

"It was pretty cool," Draffen says. "We were just finishing up and everyone wanted to stop and jump out and take a picture." The eagle is one half of a pair that Draffen says he sees "almost every day" at the course which became the world's first Audubon International Certified Gold Signature Sanctuary in 2001. Their nest on course has two eaglets, Draffen says.

Several area superintendents also turned out to help with demonstrations and to answer questions during the tour, which was sponsored in part by the Florida GCSA. Among them was Florida GCSA president David Dore-Smith from Copperleaf Golf Club, Kyle Sweet, CGCS from The Sanctuary Golf Club and Kirsten Conover from Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club.

"This event is right in line with our continued efforts to promote the success of stewardship efforts of our members," Dore-Smith says. "We've been working hard to inform environmental groups in various counties of the good work our members do every day. Todd did a wonderful job showcasing the positive role golf has with the environment through the Best Management Practices that we employ throughout the state."

Among those doing the touring were representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Environmental Protection Agency and South Florida Water Management District. "I think it's fair to say that they were extremely impressed with the level of professionalism, environmental stewardship and passion that the presenters from our industry provided," Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan says.

The tour was doubly notable for Draffen who was at Old Collier from the start. He worked there from 2000 to 2007 before heading to TPC Treviso Bay. He returned to Old Collier last



David Dore-Smith was among several superintendents to help with the tour demonstrating the use of a soil moisture meter.

year to replace Tim Hiers, CGCS who is now at The Club at Mediterra. "It was interesting trying to remember all that we did way back in the beginning," Draffen says. "But it was a very valuable exercise being able to show these folks what we set out to do and what it has become."

Draffen says several EPA representatives were making return visits from Washington, DC to see the course. "I think it says a lot that they thought there was a benefit in coming here again to see how things are continuing to evolve," he says. "It was a golf course tour but it was also a golf course maintenance tour, a wildlife tour, a native plant tour, we covered everything."

Over nearly four hours, visitors were led through Draffen's golf course maintenance facility to learn about equipment, chemical storage, the mix-load area and more. They then watched multiple demonstrations including walk-mowing, spraying and aerification before traveling the golf course. There was further discussion over dinner at the club.

The tour is conducted under the auspices of the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation. It gives those who write regulations controlling water, crop protection chemicals, food safety and the agricultural workforce the opportunity to see production practices firsthand. ■



Todd Draffen, closest to the flag, gives regulators a run down on Best Management Practices he uses at Old Collier.



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Green Section Focuses KAMMERER ON FLORIDA



Steve Kammerer is the new Southeast Region director for the USGA Green Section.

Several months into the job, Steve Kammerer is finding his feet in his new role as regional director of the USGA Green Section's Southeast Region. Kammerer comes to the position after 27 years in the ag-chem industry with experience in sales, technical service and research and development. He replaced John Foy who retired in December after 30 years with the Green Section.

Kammerer will be based out of Atlanta, GA and will team with Patrick O'Brien and Todd Lowe covering the Southeast. Chris Hartwiger, director of the USGA course consulting service, also handles some course visits in the Southeast. Kammerer began his career with Fermenta/ISK Biosciences in the late 1980s and, through a series of mergers and acquisitions, arrived at Syngenta where he worked until last year. Most recently, he was Syngenta's global technical manager for abiotic stress mitigation and plant health.

He has extensive familiarity across the Southeast with golf course superintendents, distributors, researchers and governmental agencies. He also has experience in aquatics, ornamentals and precision delivery and monitoring of drought and heat stress and irrigation delivery in crop production systems.

A native of Xenia, OH Kammerer received a B.S. from the Ohio State University and an M.S. in plant pathology from the University of Georgia. In 2011, he received a Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of Florida. His research included a two-year scouting program on golf courses to identify and quantify the susceptibility and pathogenicity of *Rhizoctonia* species as affected by temperature, pH and salinity on seashore paspalum and bermudagrass.

The Florida Green put some questions to Kammerer this spring to further his introduction to superintendents in the state:

Age: 51

Handicap: I don't have a GHIN but I'm about a 21.

Greatest moment in golf: Playing golf with my son when he was 15 and watching him almost ace the island green on the 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass.

Hobbies and interests: Faith, family and fitness - which includes golf.

Family: Married for 21 years, with a son 19 and daughter 18.

Can you give us the meat of your job description as you see it and how will you know if you're doing a good job? Providing seamless transition to golf course facilities from the exceptional performance of John Foy over the years. Today we are employing and building on the advancement of tools for resource management and expanding the golf sustainability message and what it means to a greater audience, both in the U.S. and globally.

What do you bring to your role that superintendents will benefit most from? What strikes me as really desirable is that all of the agronomists and USGA people work in concert, each contributing to a common goal, but also each having a unique skill set that collectively is communicated and makes the USGA stronger as a whole. There is little top-down bureaucracy in the USGA and new ideas are welcomed. I come from a different background than most and my skills in stress monitoring and mitigation as it relates to disease, insect and weed management can help superintendents.

Given that the Green Section still doesn't have a helicopter, how are you going to allocate your time over such a large geographic area with such a high concentration of golf courses? Fortunately in today's society, there are more and more technological gadgets that help with communication and planning. This is no substitute for physical interaction but as I indicated earlier, the excellent communication and cooperation among the USGA agronomists blurs the lines of specific geographies. We all work together to accomplish common and shared goals and needs.

The game is under increasing pressure to be the ideal environmental citizen. Coming from your background at Syngenta, what is the future for golf and the way courses are maintained? It's no mystery looking into the crystal ball and trying to foresee the future as it pertains to golf and environmental stewardship. This is included in the many sustainability efforts the USGA is employing. Parts of Europe and Canada have been increasingly restrictive in the use of important chemicals for golf course management. To expect the U.S. not to follow suit at some time is shortsighted. However, being proactive, data in concert with universities through the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program and building consensus are critical building blocks. It is hoped that concerns can be addressed and alleviated in preparation for any future challenges.

What is your take on the state of the golf industry in general? Can you touch on how you see the game in Florida: Florida is probably more affected by the economy than most states as most of the play is affected by tourism. Making golf more affordable and fun can only help in this regard. I am seeing more and more retirees taking up golf as a social activity, as a result I think executive courses with shorter holes will continue to do well.

What role does the USGA Green Section have in the future health and vitality of the industry? Improving the connection of golf to the environment is a central theme of our mission. The USGA has long been committed to supporting turfgrass and environmental research to provide solid scientific data. The results are technological advances, better grasses and information on which to make improved management decisions. Our goal is to share that information directly through the course consulting service and more broadly on a global scale by capitalizing on the USGA's education and outreach avenues. We will continue to assemble a rich set of resources, scientific expertise and turfgrass innovations to help advance a more sustainable game.

You have degrees from three different colleges in three different states. Do you think of yourself as a Buckeye, a Bulldog or a Gator? The sports angle of colleges is unique to the U.S. I once had a manager tell me (jokingly?) that my mistake was

deciding on a college based on the academics whereas he went to a different SEC school because they had the best football team. While living in Europe, you never see anyone walking around with say Oxford football or Oxford athletic department shirts or hats. When I do watch a Buckeye football game, the only real connection I have is on the rare occasion that I see a player from my home town of Xenia. I have an assortment of shirts from UGA, Ohio State and UF but also Clemson (courtesy of Bert McCarty), Tennessee and even Purdue that says Purdue Turf Pathology (courtesy of Rick Latin). None of them have a sports team name or mascot on them except for the Gator head logo on a UF turf science shirt. I don't play favorites. ■



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Greg Pheneger is understandably happy in his work at John's Island Club.



Winning Friends and Influencing People

Pheneger Champions Golf In Halls of Government

By Trent Bouts

The first time Greg Pheneger spoke publicly for golf was at a meeting on fertilizer ordinances at the City of Vero Beach. Some in the audience tried to shout him down. When he returned to his seat they booed and hissed, told him to go home, that his message was untrue, a lie basically.

Like any golf course superintendent, Pheneger knew a schism existed between the way golf behaved environmentally and the way some people thought it did. But until that moment, his experience of that gap had largely been notional. Now, he was staring it in the face, quite literally.

It was a rude awakening, especially for someone who's earliest memories of the game included sleeping under the shirt rack in his dad's pro shop at Highlands Golf Club just outside Columbus, OH.

Recently, and remarkably, one of those leading the chorus of jeers that night in 2012 urged Pheneger, golf course director at John's Island Club in Indian River Shores, to run for local office. "I was shocked," he says. "But she said, 'You opposed me on some issues but you do your research and you know what you're doing.'"

Phenegar politely declined: “I just don’t have the time.” Still, the moment was a victory for reality over perception, for engagement over retreat, for “getting to know the people” as much as the issues they differ on.

Those are principles Phenegar has applied as a lead agent of the Florida GCSA’s government relations outreach for more than a decade now. You do your homework, you identify your talking points and you get to know who you’re talking to.

“There are other things in their lives,” he says of whoever might be sitting across the desk, or the aisle. “They may ride bikes. They may have children. There’s usually something you can find to connect with. And when you find that thing it makes dealing with your issue so much easier.”

That latter point underscores the adage that all politics is local. That is why GCSAA now places such an emphasis on its Grassroots Ambassador initiative. Yes, the national association can employ a lobbying presence in Washington, DC but senators and congressmen are answerable, and elected, back home. They may cast their votes at the other end of the country but their opinions are formed down here.

If GCSAA’s goal is to build a network of volunteers to serve as the “go-to” people for lawmakers and their staff on golf course management issues then Phenegar’s experience should serve as a blueprint. As former Florida GCSA executive director Joel Jackson, CGCS jokes, Phenegar has been doing government relations since “somewhere between the stone age and the bronze age.”

“He is a savvy guy who can talk intelligently with these people about anything,” Jackson says. “There are a lot of highly influential people, including some who hold political office, at his club. A lot of his members are used to leading the band, so to speak. And Greg is very comfortable in that environment.”

Today, Phenegar is the Grassroots Ambassador assigned to long-time U.S. Senator Bill Nelson. Jackson remembers a time when Nelson didn’t have that kind of access to sound information. He was part of a delegation scheduled to meet with the Senator but Nelson was called to DC on short notice. Instead, the golf group met with Nelson’s chief of staff.

“We went through the whole presentation covering water, pesticides, golf’s economic role, all of it,” Jackson says. “At the end this guy says, ‘I had no idea.’ And he meant it. At first, I’m thinking to myself ‘Are you serious?’ But after a few minutes it dawned on me, how would he know unless somebody told him.”

As a representative of the Florida GCSA and the Florida Turfgrass Association, as golf lead on the industry advocacy committee, Phenegar has “told” the game’s story perhaps more often and to more people than anyone else. Occasionally that has amounted to crisis management but mostly, and most effectively, it has occurred out front of issues.

“As I try to tell the government relations community, the best time to go and knock on doors is when you don’t have an ask, when you don’t need anything,” Phenegar says. “They (lawmakers) want help, they need help, they don’t know what you know necessarily. And government relations belongs to the ones who show up.”

That may be true but Jennifer Bryan, who replaced Jackson when he stepped down as executive director, says there is more to it. “It’s not easy sometimes walking into a room for the first time,” she says. “You don’t always know who’s in front of you in terms of how they feel about golf. I’ll be honest it’s not something that’s in my comfort zone. But Greg is never awkward in those moments. He’s very much at ease. He can hang with the best of them.”

It speaks to Phenegar’s contributions on behalf of his profession that he has won the highest honors bestowed by both the Florida GCSA (Distinguished Service Award) and the Florida Turfgrass Association (Wreath of Grass). He is also a past-president of both associations. But the fact that he won both awards years ago – 2007 and 2012 respectively – yet is still leading the way in 2016 says something else again.

That continuity has been invaluable but the benefits are difficult to quantify because, like the cop who wrestles a gun from an angry guy stepping onto a bus, it’s what doesn’t happen next that’s really important.

Phenegar has been that cop pounding the beat in golf’s best interests from D.C. to Tallahassee and of course even closer to home. He’s been a fixture on delegations at National Golf Day and Florida Golf Day since they began. Mostly though, the bulk of his work is less visible.

“In my local area, pretty much anything to do with grass and landscapes now, whatever it is, there’s three or four city council men and county commissioners that call me,” he says. “Even



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services assistant commissioner Mike Joyner hears from Greg Phenegar during a visit to Tallahassee.



The 15th hole at John's Island's West Course.

ones from other towns, they'll call to ask me questions, ask me what I think about a certain issue."

Those relationships didn't happen overnight or, as Bryan suggested, necessarily easily at first.

"It's scary," Pheneger admits of stepping from fresh air and a putting green into halls of marble and mahogany you are likely to find in Washington. "I remember the first time I went and talked to one of my local commissioners, I was scared. My heart was

beating. But they're just like us, particularly at that level, they're just like us."

That realization enables Pheneger to find ease with the gamut of officials – elected and appointed – that he deals with, including some, like Marco Rubio, who have run for President. It is an ease he believes is within reach of many superintendents. He has offered "many times" to spend time coaching colleagues on government relations but "haven't had anybody really take me up." "I try to get them involved. People are probably tired of hearing from me."

Still, he senses that tide is shifting, along with the nature of the Florida GCSA itself. "I think we were a bigger organization 20 years ago," he says. "More people went to more events than they do now. But I think that's just because there's so many different things you can go to. I can get education in so many ways now. I mean, I can get it walking down the street type of thing."

By contrast, Pheneger says the measure of the Florida GCSA's strength now is less about numbers and more about substance. "I see momentum in that the people that are engaged are much more engaged now," he says. "They're realizing that we've got a bit of a target on our back from different groups."

As long as they keep aiming, Pheneger says, he'll keep wrestling the weapons away. The fight is in his blood now. "I think it's there, yes," he laughs. "They (the Florida GCSA and Florida Turfgrass Association) can ease me out whenever they feel it's time. But I would like to stay involved. Even if it's not at a state level I would like to stay involved locally."



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54 Holes, 75 Employees and A Zig-Zag Here and There



Greg Pheneger, left, manages 54 holes at John's Island Club with 36 on the island itself and "bridges everywhere." The remaining 18, built in a sand dune, sits seven miles away. With 75 employees it's a wonder he has time for any volunteer work let alone the amount he puts in.

Part of the answer, he says, is getting the most out of the people who work for him. "You have to empower your people to make decisions," he says. "Otherwise, why have them there."

In order to help him better know who he can empower and just how far he can go, Pheneger hosts lunches in his office for three people at a time, including hourly workers. Lunch is catered from the clubhouse and the discussion centers on "stuff." "It can be work related if that's the way they want it to go," he says. "Or it can be what their children doing. We just talk about stuff."

Pheneger has hosted lunches for "a few years" and says they have been invaluable. "You find out which ones are really switched on," he says. "We moved a guy into a spray tech position because he asked a lot of questions about it. He wanted to know more. And all superintendents know your spray tech has to care. Your spray tech can kill you in the job. I learned another guy had experience in house construction. Guess who we put on that when we need something like that done now?"

But the lunches are not simply about talent identification. "I don't want my hourly employees to be scared to walk into my office or to come up and talk to me," he says. "There shouldn't be a wall. They can be your eyes out there. They're our lifeblood."

Pheneger also strives to be approachable outside his office walking nine holes of each course every week. That might not sound like a major project but each sojourn takes "two to two and half hours" given the way he does it.

"I always take a different route," he says. "And I go where I hit a golf ball which is often not down the fairway. I'm never in a straight line. I zig-zag and I circle around so sometimes I back-track because I notice something behind me. I'm punching notes into my phone the whole time." When he can manage those walks early morning, before golfers are busy, Pheneger says he gets to spend important time with employees. "I may stop and mow a tee for them," he adds. "It's time we may not get otherwise."

Knowing his team well is something Pheneger has long put stock in. Before arriving at John's Island Club in 1993, he was at PGA National Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens where he arrived out of Ohio State University in 1980. He started under Larry Weber when there was only one of the now five courses. Then he worked for Luke Majorcki before taking over when Majorcki retired after the PGA Championship in 1987.

"It was nuts there in '87," Pheneger recalls with a shake of the

head. "We had six events in a seven-month span. I'll tell you it was horrible. Trying to keep the crew motivated through all of that when they are getting three and four hours of sleep, then they've got to turn around and do it all again, that was tough." Knowing what drove each individual to get up each morning carried more weight than simply giving directions.

It was since arriving at John's Island that Pheneger decided to "start giving back" by becoming involved with the Treasure Coast GCSA. That seed had been sown through a relationship he'd built with Florida GCSA past-president Mark Jarrell, CGCS while playing softball on a superintendent team back in his early days at PGA National.

John's Island Club encouraged him to be involved as well. "They see it as a plus," he says. "The club understands the knowledge you gain just by being involved. They understand the value of the relationships you build with the people you get to meet."

Accordingly, Pheneger encourages a similar path for those who work for him. One of his superintendents John Curran is current secretary-treasurer of the Florida GCSA. Another, Barry Balavender is on the Florida Turfgrass Association board of directors.

"I love where I am at," Pheneger says. "I have been at places that have held Ryder Cups, PGA Championships, Senior PGA Championships and now I'm at a top 10 club in the nation that hosted the U.S. Mid-Amateur. Yes, it's busy but I'm doing fine." ■

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Count on it.

Calusa GCSA Shows Kids "SOMEBODY GIVES A DARN"

By Trent Bouts



There were a lot of happy faces after the Calusa GCSA members spoke at last year's Camp for Champions and that includes audience and speakers.

Golf course superintendents in Florida raise money for turfgrass research, scholarships and benevolent funds. But some of the most important dollars they raise go to charity. Here is the first of an occasional series that explores the impact some of the state's GC-SAA affiliated chapters are having far from the golf course.

The Calusa GCSA has been providing help to the Children's Network of Southwest Florida for several years now. The network is the lead agency for child welfare services for Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades Counties. As such it is responsible for more than 1,800 abused and neglected children as well as at-risk children.

So when Calusa GCSA president Mark Jacobs from Shell Point Golf Club in Fort Myers visited one of the network's group homes last December it was nothing new to him. Along with other superintendents, he'd delivered Christmas presents from the chapter a few times. He knew full well how much the kids appreciated them. Or at least he thought he did.

"I can't remember specifically what the present was but when this boy opened it up he said, 'I've never gotten one of these before,'" Jacobs says. "Two of us were standing there and we both thought he was talking about whatever the gift was. But he said, 'No. I've never gotten a present before.' The two of us nearly burst into tears. Holy moly."

That boy was one of about 30 boys and girls in two group homes who received gifts generated through the chapter's annual Golf for the Children's Classic. The event at The Forest Country Club in December, hosted by Matt Gaudet, CGCS raised about \$20,000 taking the total raised in support of the Children's Network over the years to more than \$60,000.

What that kind of support means to those kids, aged six to 17, is impossible to measure. But moments like the one Jacobs encountered with that boy gives you some idea. A letter of thanks from Children's Network chief executive officer Nadereh Salim suggests there were many others like it.

"What an amazing Christmas it has been for our kids because of what you and other caring Calusa friends have made possible," Salim wrote. "I have said it before, I'll say it again. Our community has been blessed by your partnership and friendship. I remember a few tears, tears of joy of course. Some of the kids saying they were overwhelmed with their emotions because they never actually had a Christmas (with gifts before) and they never knew total strangers could care so deeply about them."

Jacobs shared Salim's note with members in a chapter newsletter, in which he asked if members remembered what they wanted for Christmas when they were teenagers.

“How about at least one present that someone put thought into, someone to just care if you smiled, or hoping you had a meal to look forward to?” he wrote. “I know I wasn’t necessarily hoping for things like that at that age because I probably took it for granted that those would always be there for me. Well, thanks to all of you Calusa GCSA sponsors, members, volunteers and everyone associated with the chapter, 31 less fortunate kids with the Children’s Network of Southwest Florida received all of that. It has been truly amazing to see what comes of our chapter’s efforts for this, and all things we do.”

Salim tells The Florida Green that the Calusa GCSA has “touched the child welfare system in the area, really, like no other partner has.” “Because they don’t set any boundaries on the way they are willing to help,” she says. “It’s far more than the monetary support which is wonderful in itself, of course. But they have been so involved personally.”

She says the level of engagement from superintendents is obvious. “When you have these big guys with tears in their eyes hanging Christmas decorations alongside these kids it’s amazing,” she says. “We have so many kids tell us their parents never did anything like that with them. I really respect how much these guys are willing to give of themselves.”

Last summer, that “giving” included a visit by several superintendents to the Children’s Network’s annual Camp for Champions.



Calusa GCSA’s Mark Jacobs from Shell Point Golf Club, left, and Mark Thomas from Kelly Greens Golf and Country Club with Nadereh Salim from the Children’s Network and one of the first checks donated to the organization.

The two-week event for about 60 kids in foster care exposes them to daily visits and talks from role models in the community. “The guys from the Calusa brought golf clubs and tees and displays and really engaged the kids,” Salim says. “And the kids had so many questions for them. A couple even said that’s what



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they want to do when they grow up.”

This spring, Calusa GCSA members and vendors built a concrete basketball half-court for one of the homes in the Children’s Network. Through donations, volunteer labor and heavily discounted pricing for materials, the court made a reality out of what previously fell into the “wildest dreams” category for the kids at the house. Because of the discounting, the chapter had money to buy basketballs and other items for the court.

Calusa GCSA board member Jake Wentz from the Verandah Club in Fort Myers was one who was heavily involved in the court project. “These boys are pumped,” he says. “It was really cool to see the boys helping and how excited they all are. I was talking with one of them about painting the lines and I said, ‘I don’t want to mess them up.’ Or something like that. And he said, ‘We’re so grateful for this there is no messing it up.’ I thought that was pretty cool, the kid was probably 12 or so.”

But Jacobs says the “giving” doesn’t have to be on such a large scale to make a difference. “More than a few have said that it means a lot ‘just to know somebody gives a darn about us,’” he says. “It’s a pretty emotional thing to see what our involvement means to those kids. It’s an amazing thing to be able to put a smile on the face of teenage kids when you think about what some of them have had to go through and go without.”

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The Calusa GCSA tries to personalize some of its support by asking for wish-lists from each of the kids which members then go out and buy. “We’ll hear from them that they need a pair of running shoes or something but sometimes they don’t ask for much so we’ll top up a little bit with a gift card,” Jacobs says. “We also provide group gifts for each of the houses like new TVs and other things for the interior.”

Jacobs says members are also considering other ways to be involved throughout the year “so it’s not just a matter of handing over some presents then saying ‘See you next year.’” One possibility being explored is for the children to attend a chapter event, make golf course visits or maybe even gain some work experience.

“A lot of these kids are really talented it seems like,” Jacobs says. “Some are phenomenal singers and artists. On one visit the kids all said we needed to hear one of them sing. Well, this kid was as quiet as could be but they eventually got him to sing with another kid singing back up. As soon as he opened his mouth you could feel the hair standing up on your arms. It was just incredible.”

Jacobs says the kids even cajoled the guys from the Calusa GCSA into singing “group Christmas carols.” “There was a bit of a barrier when we first started turning up at the houses,” he says. “You’d get some looks from the kids because they had no idea who these guys were showing up out of nowhere. Some are still a little quiet but others jump right in and start directing things.”

Significantly, Jacobs says the benefit from the chapter’s involvement with the Children’s Network goes both ways. He and other members had their own children help wrapping presents which opened some young eyes. “It’s a good perspective for our kids to be aware that there are other kids not as fortunate,” he says.

The experience has even led some members to re-evaluate their relationship with their own families. Jacobs has three daughters aged 10 to 16 and says he is more mindful about the time he spends with each of them now and the same is true for some other chapter members.

Last year the Calusa GCSA also collected more than 600lbs of food for the Bank of Southwest Florida. It extends a tradition of charitable support from the chapter that stems back its founding in 1997. Other beneficiaries have included Ronald McDonald House, American Cancer Society, Liberty Youth Ranch and The Abuse Counseling Treatment Center of Southwest Florida.

Jacobs says it is impossible to name all of the people who have had a hand in generating the support the Calusa GCSA has been able to deliver over the years. But he says board members Wentz and Brad Caporini from Fiddlesticks Country Club have been instrumental. As he wrote in his newsletter, “A huge thank you to all of our sponsors, members, supporters, volunteers and the Christmas committee ... fantastic job! God knows it doesn’t happen without all of you.” ■



A basketball half-court begins to take shape at the boys' group home.



Kids from the group home take their turn painting lines on their new court.



Let the games begin: Kids get busy even before the pour is fully dry.



Santa's not-so-little helpers: Mark Thomas from Kelly Greens Golf and Country Club, Jim Phelps of ShowTurf and John Deere Golf, John Vuknic from Stoneybrook Golf and Country Club, Brad Caporini from Old Corkscrew Golf Club and Mark Jacobs from Shell Point Golf Club arrive with Christmas presents.



Calusa GCSA members and friends in the blue shirts with Children's Network staff and kids during an earlier visit.



John Vuknic from Stoneybrook Golf and Country Club provides a virtual tour of the golf course watched by Mark Jacobs from Shell Point Golf Club on the left and, on the right side of the display, Jeff Burgoyne from Legends Golf and Country Club, Russ Clement from Pelican Preserve Golf Club and Jim Phelps of ShowTurf and John Deere Golf.



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Slip, Slop, Slap: Sounds Silly BUT IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

By David Dore-Smith

David Dore-Smith says treatment for actinic keratosis was “painful, uncomfortable and embarrassing for a few days” but a small price to pay.



Day One



Day Four



Day Five



David Dore-Smith today.

Slip, Slop, Slap: When I was growing up in Australia, that was the slogan used to help promote skin cancer awareness by reminding you to slip on a shirt, slop on some sunscreen and slap on a hat. It became a catchy slogan and had kids all over the country singing the accompanying jingle.

I wish I could now go back in time and follow, without question, those basic recommendations. Now in my 40's, routine visits to my dermatologist have become a normal practice due to the repeated sun damage I experienced as a child, teenager and young adult.

There are numerous occasions I remember being burned to a crisp after a day on the beach or an afternoon playing outdoor sports. Forget the zinc cream, wide brimmed hats and long sleeves – I was the typical bronzed Aussie but without the blue eyes and blonde hair. Over the past five years, the reality of all those days spent out in the sun is catching up with me.

In 2011, I had a suspicious raised area below my left eye diagnosed as a squamous cell carcinoma and subsequently went through my first Mohs surgery. Mohs surgery is a precise surgical technique in which thin layers of cancer-containing skin are progressively removed. Each layer undergoes microscopic examination until only cancer-free tissue remains. Examination of each layer occurs during rather than after the surgery, eliminating the need to estimate how far out or deep the roots of the skin cancer go.

I had previously had areas burned off the backs of my hands and side of my face with liquid nitrogen (cryosurgery) that hadn't worried me too much. However, after having a four-inch incision cut into my face, and the subsequent scar, I became a lot more conscious of the effects of the sun.

This year after another routine visit to the dermatologist, another

squamous cell carcinoma was discovered, this time on my left upper eyelid. A second Mohs surgery removed a quarter of my eyelid to rid me of this potentially lethal cancer. Thankfully, the eyelid was sewn back together with precision and the offending area is barely visible.

Through follow up visits to assess recovery, my dermatologist recommended a blue light treatment for my face due to the evidence of actinic keratosis, a skin condition that can become cancerous. In this case, a liquid product (Levulan) was applied to my entire face and left to absorb into the skin for two hours. I then was subjected to 12 minutes of blue light therapy that was one of the most uncomfortable experiences of my life. For 12 minutes, it felt like I had fallen face down in a pile of angry fire ants or landed face first into a bowl full of pop rocks candy with thousands of tiny explosions going off at once. The stinging sensation was only moderately subdued by the self-application of cool air through a tube.

This treatment immediately made my face appear quite red and left the feeling of being sunburned. Little did I know that the following days were some of the most depressing of my life. The treatment identifies all of the precancerous lesions and causes them to redden, swell and blister before finally becoming scaly and sloughing off.

Apparently I had a lot of these areas as my entire face was impacted. This effect lasted for almost six days before a baby smooth skin miraculously appeared underneath. This was only the first of three treatments scheduled over the next three months with follow up treatments in April and July.

I must say that now I have fully recovered from the first treatment, I am glad that I went through with the procedure. Yes, it is painful, uncomfortable and embarrassing for a few days; however,

I firmly believe that if I had not addressed the issue now, the future for me would not be so bright.

The precancerous areas will not improve on their own; in fact they will only get worse. As your skin ages, it is less likely to recover from these type of procedures and the use of liquid nitrogen to freeze impacted areas is simply not enough and only masks an underlying issue.

May is National Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month and I encourage all of you to remember to visit a dermatologist annually. If you don't have a dermatologist, ask one of your peers at your next chapter meeting who they see and make an appointment.

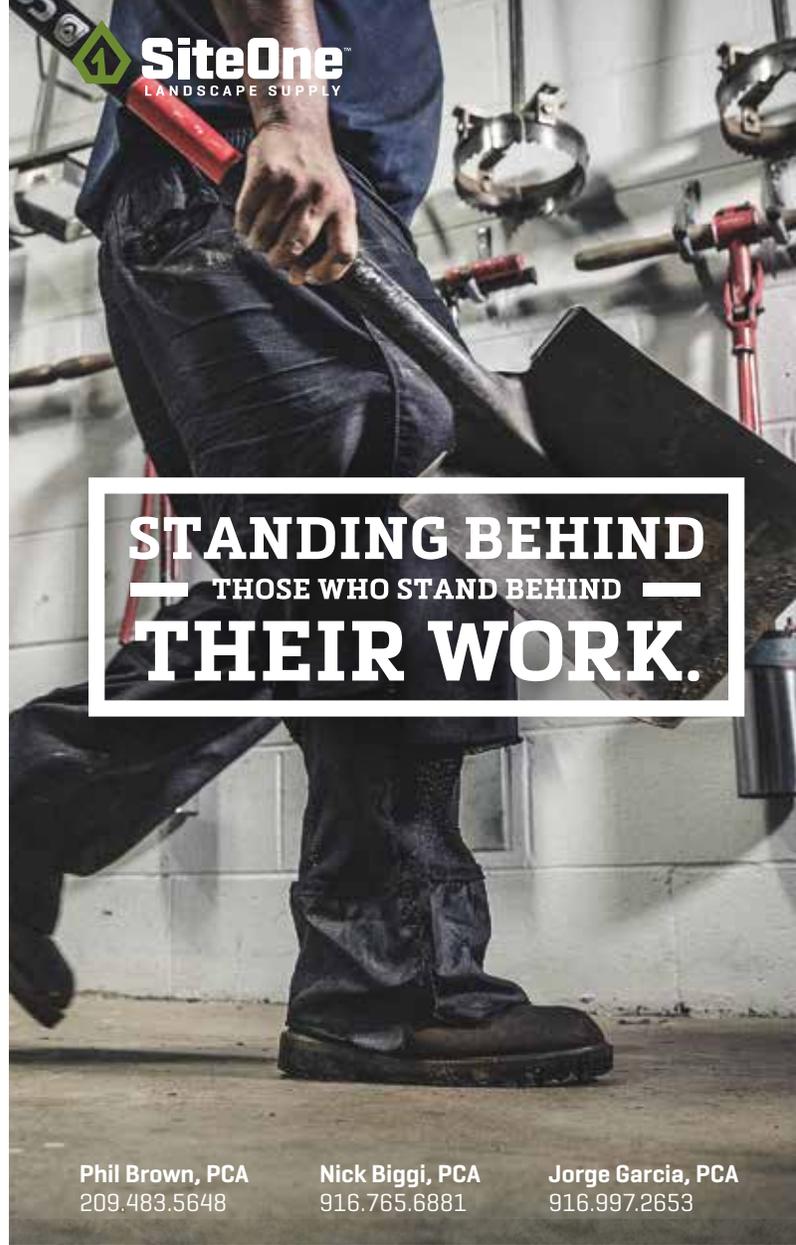
For those chapters looking to add a benefit to a local meeting; perhaps invite a dermatologist to give a presentation on skin cancer awareness and provide some free screening advice for your members. I now provide wide brimmed hats and free sunscreen to all of my employees and encourage them to wear polarized sunglasses. One ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Although it's a silly slogan; please remember to Slip, Slop, Slap this summer and help prevent the world's most common cancer – skin cancer. ■

-David Dore-Smith is director of golf course and grounds maintenance at Copperleaf Golf Club in Bonita Springs and Florida GCSA president.



A protective shield remains in David Dore-Smith's eye as surgeons progressively shave away a squamous cell carcinoma on his upper eyelid.



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El Nino's Worst May be Gone BUT NOT FORGOTTEN QUITE YET

A stronger than normal El Nino season may have finally lost momentum but its impact will likely inspire remedial projects at a number of courses this summer. El Nino's sustained spell of wet and cloudy conditions through winter created headaches for golf course superintendents as saturated soils weakened root systems and compromised turf health.

In one stretch in the West Palm Beach area, it rained on 32 days in a 45-day period. The 30-year average over the same timeframe in West Palm Beach is 12 days. Some areas received five-times their average rainfall.

Many superintendents will use the weeks and months ahead to address the worst affected areas, not just to make repairs but to help minimize future problems. USGA Green Section agronomist Todd Lowe says the three major areas of concern centered on shade, elevated collars and exit and entry points.

He was busy in the early part of the year helping superintendents deal with the effects of what was the strongest El Nino since 1997 when many golf courses suffered similarly poor playing conditions and turf loss. In addition to on-course consulting visits, he gave talks on El Nino at four events across the state for golf course superintendents.

Nearly 90 people turned out for a specially convened El Nino meeting at Wycliffe Golf and Country Club, where Shannon Wheeler is superintendent, in February. The free event was sponsored by Bayer, Legacy Turf Group, Syngenta and Trigon Turf Science.

"Continual rainfall created saturated conditions on fairways and roughs on many golf courses in the early part of the year," Lowe says. "The combination of wet, cool and cloudy conditions can cause considerable turf stress. Turfgrasses need sunlight for growth. Prolonged cloudy weather causes turf to deplete carbohydrate reserves that are stored in roots, weakening the root system. Roots take up oxygen from soil and saturated soils make it nearly impossible for weakened roots to survive."

Lowe urges superintendents to document the issues they experienced, warning that golfers can be quick to forget there were ever problems once the heat of summer takes over. "Be sure to involve course officials in the process by communicating the issues and offering solutions," he wrote in one Green Section Course Care Update. "People have short memories; six months from now, winter will be long-forgotten but the weaknesses in course infrastructure will remain. Even though conditions are tough now, take the opportunity to document and communicate."

Lowe encourages superintendents to evaluate shade problems now and determine which trees should be removed later this summer. "Closely mowed areas like greens and tees are especially sensitive to shade and can become thin in shaded areas," he says. "Turf thinning is worse in winter when the sun angle is lower and day



USGA Green Section agronomist Todd Lowe talks El Nino at Wycliffe Golf and Country Club.

length is shorter than summer."

Putting green collars that become elevated from years of sand topdressing were also a common issue exposed by El Nino, Lowe says. "These 'sand dams' can reduce surface runoff and cause water to sit on putting green perimeters for long periods," he says. "Furthermore, mowers often cause more mechanical stress along green perimeters with elevated collars. Take note of weak green perimeters and determine whether collar stripping, aeration or excavation or reshaping is needed later this year."

Lowe says many courses were forced to introduce 'cart path only' restrictions because of the wet conditions. Regularly repositioned ropes and stakes to direct traffic at entry and exit points was also an important tool to help spread the wear and tear. By late March much of the immediate pressure caused by El Nino had passed. Lowe says some areas of the state were even grappling with "a dry spell."

One other point he noted from visits in recent months was the number of "newer" courses that struggled with issues on their greens through winter. "They haven't had the time to accumulate that pad of thatch and organic matter that older greens have," he says. "That left them more vulnerable than some of the more established courses." ■

Save the Dates for Great Golf AND GETAWAY OPPORTUNITIES



Florida GCSA golf committee chair Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Golf Club sends the field off in last year's state championship at Reunion Resort while executive director Jennifer Bryan looks on.

The invitation from the Florida GCSA's golf committee could hardly be more emphatic: "The more the merrier." That's the message committee members are pushing in advance of this year's slate of golf events across the state. The first of the big five tournaments is right around the corner with the Everglades GCSA hosting the Poa Annuia Classic in May.

"We are really trying to inject a little new energy and enthusiasm into the golf events," committee chair Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Golf Club in Boynton Beach, says. "We tweaked some things last year here and there and we're optimistic that we can generate more interest from members. All events have a stroke play championship and a two- or four-man scramble event too."

Wright says golf participation, particularly in stroke play events, has waned over the years "for whatever reason." "It's too easy to let some of the great history and traditions of these events go by the wayside," he says. "So the golf committee has been working closely with the host chapters to see if we can create a little tailwind, get some ideas flowing and get guys playing again."

One change this year is an earlier date for the Florida GCSA Team Championship. The committee has brought the two-day event up to the first week of August to create more room before school goes back from summer break. With the championship venue now in Orlando, Wright says the hope is more superintendents will look

Save These Dates

May 12-14

Poa Annuia Classic

Marriott Resort, Marco Island

August 4-5

Florida GCSA Championship

Reunion Resort, Orlando

September 26-28

Florida Turfgrass Association Championship

Innisbrook Resort, Palm Harbor

September 30-October 1

Fall Classic

Amelia Island Plantation

TBD

Crowfoot Open

Grand Cypress Resort

to make the event a family affair perhaps tagging on a visit to Disneyworld or Universal Studios.

The championship is at Reunion Resort once again. It moved to the resort for the first time last year after a long run at Southern Dunes Golf and Country Club in Haines City. The event will again include a two-man scramble for golfers not competing in the team or individual championships. This was another first last year and attracted more than 20 teams.

Wright serves on the golf committee with Deron Zendt, a fellow Palm Beach GCSA member, Stuart Bothe from the Everglades GCSA, Mike Stevens from the North Florida GCSA and Nick Kearns from the Suncoast GCSA and West Coast GCSA. "We work with host chapters to put on these great tournaments at some exceptional golf courses," Wright says. "This year's events are scheduled in locations that make for a great family weekend or a two-day getaway buddies trip." ■

Superintendents Earn Seat AT TABLE ON REEF EFFORTS

The Florida GCSA is at the forefront of efforts to ensure Florida's Southeast golf courses don't become collateral damage as a consequence of efforts to enhance the health of Florida's coastal waters and reefs from Miami-Dade County north to Martin County. The association and a coalition of green industry groups are urging the authors of draft recommendations for improved reef health to bring more science to their work.

The existing recommendations are the result of 30 months worth of work by the Southeast Florida Ocean Reef Task Force, now known as the Coastal Ocean Forum. But the Florida GCSA and the green industry alliance argue some of those recommendations, while well-intentioned, are not sufficiently grounded in science.

Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan says that while "golf appears to by a relatively small focus for the group at this time" it could be adversely affected if current recommendations in areas such as fertilizer use were adopted as they stand. Bryan says some recommendations would simply "not stand up under sound scientific scrutiny."

Of particular concern in the draft recommendations are statements related to nutrients and run-off/leaching, the use of glyphosate and other pesticides, and the attributes of Paspalum versus other turfgrass varieties.

"What they have at the moment is a list of their proposed recommendations that they would like to see all cities and municipalities adopt," Bryan says. "But I think because of our efforts to engage in the logic and science behind these recommendations in a reasonable manner they are listening and I believe we will be invited back for future meetings. As the group moves forward it will be important to have a voice for fertilizer present."

Early April, Bryan met with some of the authors of the draft recommendations and others from regulatory agencies, municipalities, the Sierra Club and fishing and recreational groups. She came away with a strong sense that the Task Force now realized they needed more science to underpin their recommendations.

"Honestly, it's unclear what their next steps will be, particularly in an election year," Bryan says. "But I do think they appreciate that we want to be part of the solution. I think they are also realizing we have done our homework and that the way our members operate is informed by science, science that perhaps the Task Force didn't have in framing some of their recommendations."

The Florida GCSA was among green industry 11 signatories that wrote to the Task Force early March. Their letter said the group's draft report was "comprehensive and includes many worthwhile recommendations." But the letter also pointed out that the signatory groups were also "active stakeholders in the effort to improve the environmental health of Florida with particular attention paid to its precious waters." ■

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IN THE NEWS



Ramsey Prescott

Lost Key Golf Club, Perdido Key

PR.com, January 7

WCI Communities has named Rodney Whisman golf course. Originally designed by Arnold Palmer Golf Designs, Lost Key was the first course in the world to become certified through the Audubon International Silver Signature Program. Certified on July 29, 1998, Lost Key has been recertified by Audubon International and is celebrating its seventeenth year as a Certified Signature Sanctuary.

Located on Florida's northwest coast near the Alabama state line, the 287-acre property is situated on Perdido Key in Escambia County...Lost Key Golf Club is one of the few areas of protected wilderness in the Florida panhandle, and has faced significant inundation and damage from hurricanes. But the plant community, a mixture of North Florida flatwoods, sand scrub, and North Florida coastal strand, has survived and flourished. Wildlife corridors wind through sand live oak, sand pine, and slash pine, and support pairs of nesting osprey and American bald eagle, alligator, deer, and healthy shore bird populations.

Following the site review, Ramsey Prescott, golf course superintendent, said: "At Lost Key Golf Club, we agree in a co-existence of both humans and nature, and believe that the best way to sustain that co-existence is by developing and maintaining our property with best management practices. By working with Audubon International through their signature program, we are able to implement effective cultural practices, follow with proper water management techniques and develop sound fertility programs while protecting the environment and preserving the natural heritage of the game of golf."

Billy Huskins

Highland Woods Golf and Country Club, Naples

Naples Daily News, January 23

Highland Woods Golf and Country Club will tee off the \$6.5-million redo of its golf course, clubhouse and cart barn with a grand opening party for its residents. And because each of the 799 households paid an assessment of \$7,592 to refresh the two-decade-old amenities, general manager Bill Clark is expecting a big crowd.

Planning for the renovation of the Bonita Springs private-equity community began in summer 2012. A community task force took a look at what needed to be done to make the amenities competitive with newer golf course communities in the area. They came up with a slew of ideas.

One was to rip up the aging Gordon Lewis-designed golf course, which sees about 40,000 rounds a year.

While the overall design was maintained... the course was resprigged with Tifeagle bermudagrass on the greens; Celebration bermudagrass on the fairways and 419 bermudagrass in the roughs. Golf course superintendent Billy Huskins oversaw the golf course makeover.



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Tribute to All Superintendents

Florida Golf Day

Tampa Bay Times, March 16

Florida golf isn't just the army of northerners that descend on towns from Milton to Miami each winter, hitting every public, semi-private and resort course for precious rounds they can't get at their snow-covered homes. Florida golf isn't the PGA Tour professionals who are in the midst of their "Florida swing" this month, having already played in South Florida and now working their way toward Clearwater, Orlando and, a few weeks after that, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Florida golf isn't a big corporate outing filling up a tee sheet at a nationally ranked track like the TPC Blue Monster at Doral, nor is it well-heeled Seminole, Isleworth and Black Diamond Ranch

Excerpts from press coverage on people in the world of golf course maintenance in Florida.

and their gotta-have-connections-to-play courses. “Florida is the No. 1 golfing destination in the world. Everything that we are doing to draw people and promote our state involves golf,” Florida Gov. Rick Scott said at Florida Golf Day in February.

Florida golf is actually 167,000 people, and \$13.8 billion. Big numbers, big game. The economic engine of Florida golf is as impressive as the island-green 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass’ Stadium Course, and unwavering in its truth.

Some 167,000 Floridians work in the golf industry, and \$13.8 billion in economic impact is realized from the state’s more than 1,100 courses, plus driving ranges and mini-golf facilities.

To keep all those facilities running takes an army of personnel, from ones that the golfer directly interacts with (reservation agents, pro-shop staffers, the first-tee starter and the beverage-cart girl) and the ones he or she doesn’t meet – like the thousands of greenkeepers who do much of their work out of sight.

“The unsung golf heroes are the superintendents and their crews,” said Greg Nathan, senior vice-president of the National Golf Foundation, a trade association for golf-related businesses.

“They consistently have more restrictions placed on them, whether environmentally or in water restrictions, and they still are the person most responsible for the key asset – the course. You don’t always get to shake the hand of the superintendent and say ‘thanks,’ but you do get to enjoy their work.”

Closing Quote

In a March 15 report, TC Palm told how Kevin Murphy, general manager at The McArthur Club in Hobe Sound, was named professional of the year by the Southeast Chapter of the South Florida PGA. But there was a line down in the story we thought superintendents might enjoy.

The story told how Murphy was first offered the job by World Golf Hall of Famer Nick Price and Peter Lund, the former president of CBS Sports. Lund apparently explained to Murphy that the club didn’t have “a bunch of committees.” Explaining why, Lund told Murphy: “We don’t want a doctor to tell the superintendent how to cut the greens.”

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Golf Day is an Ace With Lawmakers



That's Florida GCSA's Greg Pheneger and Jennifer Bryan on the far right with the golf industry representatives at Florida Golf Day in Tallahassee.

Golf course superintendents were once again a key presence at the annual Florida Golf Day in Tallahassee early February. Golf Day brings together allied golf industry groups with legislators to stress the game's importance economically, environmentally and socially. The Florida GCSA was represented by government relations chairman Greg Pheneger from John's Island Club and executive director Jennifer Bryan.

"Together, we shared with legislators our commitment to the environment and how we are taking proactive measures to demonstrate this responsibility," Bryan says. "We were proud to tout our Golf

BMP Certification Program, our reduction of water use on golf courses and golf's positive economic impact on the state of Florida. Our message was well received in Tallahassee and we look forward to next year's Golf Day."

Other groups taking part in Golf Day included Club Managers Association of America - Florida Chapter, Florida Historic Golf Trail, Florida State Golf Association, Golf Channel, GCSAA, LPGA, National Golf Course Owners Association, National Golf Foundation, North and South Florida Sections of the PGA of America, PGA of America, PGA Tour, The First Tee, USGA, World Golf Foundation and World Golf Hall of Fame.

Green Technologies Appoints Williams

Anthony Williams, CGCS, a past winner in GCSAA's President's Award for Environmental Stewardship, has joined Green Technologies as director of sales and marketing. "We are excited to have Anthony join our GreenEdge Team," the company's founder Dr. Amir Varshovi says. "His knowledge and expertise on agronomic issues with an emphasis on environmental quality fits well within our corporate values."



Anthony Williams, CGCS

Williams is an award-winning golf course superintendent and grounds manager with more than 30 years in the profession. A past-president of the Georgia GCSA, he was also national public course and overall winner of GCSAA's Environmental Leaders in Golf awards in 2006. He also won Marriott International's highest honor, the J. W. Marriott Award of Excellence and the Turf and Ornamental Communicator's Association's Environmental Communicator of the Year award. He can be reached at awilliams@green-edge.com.



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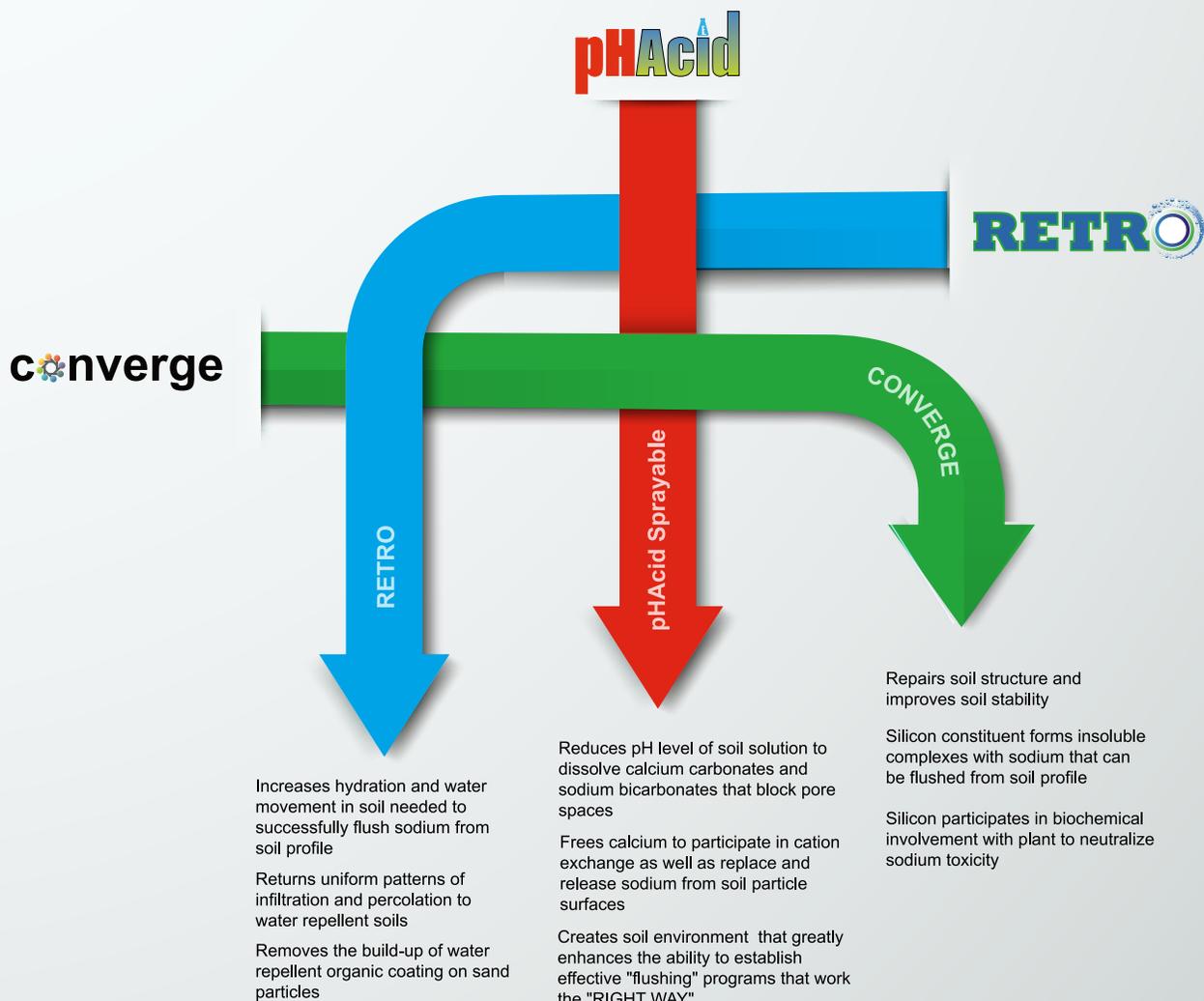
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Sweet Talk Broadens Superintendent Reach



Kyle Sweet, CGCS talks to a full house at a luncheon meeting of the Tampa Bay Association of Environmental Professionals.

Golf course superintendents continue to broaden networks and build understanding of their work with important players in the state's environmental well-being. In March, Kyle Sweet, CGCS from The Sanctuary Golf Club was guest speaker at a lunch meeting of the Tampa Bay Association of Environmental Professionals. He delivered a talk entitled "Your Golf Course Professional, an Environmental Partner for your Community."

The presentation outlined efforts nationally, statewide and locally by GCSAA, Florida GCSA and local chapters including the West Coast GCSA and the Everglades GCSA. Sweet also highlighted the collaboration of the Florida GCSA and the Florida DEP in creating the Golf Course BMPs. He led the group through a thorough review of all chapters in the BMP manual and the BMP Checklist.

Sanibel Island's Golf Course Lake BMP Report Card was also reviewed. Sweet explained how the island's Natural Resource Department has noted steady improvement and compliance with the Lake BMP's since their introduction. Those BMPs were the result of collaboration between golf courses and the City of Sanibel.

Audubon International's certification programs were also discussed. Sweet gave examples of how The Sanctuary Golf Club and others have worked toward certification. He explained that certification depended on facilities achieving high standards in outreach and education, facility operations, water quality and water conservation.

"Today's golf course superintendent can be and is a partner with the environmental community by being an educated professional with great concern for the environment and the future sustainability of the golf course industry," Sweet says.

The Florida GCSA provided sponsorship support for the event.

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More Superintendents Now BMP Certified

The number of Florida GCSA members certified under the association's Best Management Practices Program continues to climb. Nine attendees passed the testing at the end of February at the Hampton Inn and Suites in Port St. Lucie. The class and test were sponsored by the Treasure Coast GCSA.

Among those helping lead the session was Don Rainey of the University of Florida who runs the Green Industries-BMP program for the state. He handled the irrigation portion of the test. Brian Fisher, with Lake and Wetland Management, oversaw the lake management portion. Others who helped in the education and administering of the test were Dr. Bryan Unruh of the University of Florida Todd Lowe of the USGA Green Section. Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan, GCSAA and field representative Ralph Dain, USGA Green Section also worked at the session.

The next BMP class and test is at the Bay County Extension office in Destin on May 10 with a tentative session scheduled for July 20 in Venice and another late August in Bonita Springs. For more information call Bryan at (800) 732-6053.



GCSAA field representative Ralph Dain speaks to superintendents taking the BMP certification test in Port St. Lucie.

O'Brien Earns Certification

The Florida GCSA congratulates Sean O'Brien, golf course superintendent at Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club in Bradenton on earning the title of certified golf course superintendent from GCSAA. O'Brien is a 12-year GCSAA member who has been superintendent at Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club since 2013. Currently, only about 1,500 superintendents worldwide hold the title.

"We congratulate Sean on his accomplishment," says Rhett Evans, GCSAA's chief executive officer. "This certification program requires the highest set of competencies in golf course management through testing and practical application, and we are proud of the association's Class A members who have advanced to earn this highest level of professional recognition as a certified golf course superintendent."

Global Turf Equipment Brings Patten on Board

Global Turf Equipment announces Kevin Patten as the company's newest sales representative. A former golf course superintendent, Patten will represent GTE and sister company Turf Equipment Rental in the Palm Beach area. He is also the founder and president of Patten Turf Inc. - which he will continue to operate in conjunction with his new role at GTE.

"Kevin understands the needs of Florida's superintendents because he has, quite literally, walked in their shoes," GTE president Jim Sartain says. "His knowledge of the tools and procedures necessary for sustainable turf will be instrumental in providing our clients with the proper equipment."

In his new position, Patten will oversee sales and rentals around Southeast Florida. Earlier, GTE brought on Corey Kimball of Nu-Green by Corey Inc. to represent the company in the Jacksonville and North Florida region.

Harrell's Reaches 75th Anniversary

Harrell's Fertilizers is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2016. What began as a feed store in downtown Lakeland in 1941 today serves more than 10,000 customers through 18 locations and 300 employees. Third generation owner, Jack Harrell, Jr oversees the company whose products are now sold across the U.S., the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Middle East and along the Pacific Rim. The company originated in August, 1941 when Ormond and Lucile Harrell purchased a feed store in downtown Lakeland.



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Keeping Assistant Superintendents Engaged: Speakers, Networking and a Little Barbecue



Participants at the third annual assistant superintendents barbecue at Matt Taylor's Royal Poinciana maintenance facility enjoy some laughs over corn hole.

What seems like a lifetime ago, I travelled down to Florida from Ohio to pursue my career in the golf industry with the hope of one day becoming GCSAA's regional representative in Florida.... Wait a minute. That was not my ambition at the time. Heck, the position did not even exist back then.

I came down, like so many others, with the hope of eventually becoming a golf course superintendent. I was young and energetic as I absorbed everything I could from the leadership at my facility as well as those in the industry. It took me about a year and a half as an assistant to garner my first superintendent's position. For today's assistants that time is typically closer to five years.

As individuals wait longer in the wings for their turn at the helm, they need to have opportunities to continually network and learn from today's leaders. To that point, local chapters have a role to play in helping cultivate the next generation of superintendents. A number of chapters around Florida have assistant liaisons that serve on their boards. These liaisons are a great mouthpiece for local assistants and serve as a conduit feeding information back from the chapter to the assistants. If your chapter does not have an individual serving as an assistant liaison, perhaps it is time to consider the option.

Beyond adding an assistant to their board, chapters need to find other ways to include assistant superintendents to keep them involved with the industry. There are a couple of chapters that place an emphasis on assistant engagement. The Palm Beach GCSA annually conducts an assistants meeting that has education tailored for them. This meeting also serves as an opportunity for peer-to-peer networking and allows interactions with leaders from the chapter.

They have been running this meeting annually for the past five years. The format typically consists of nine holes of golf, followed by dinner and a speaker. The event is sponsored by Hector Turf and therefore the attendees incur no cost. These meetings allow superintendents to share lessons that they have learned through their own experiences providing an invaluable aid in the development of the assistants who attend.

The Everglades GCSA actually conducts three events each year to benefit assistants in their chapter. There are two educational meetings coordinated through the board of directors where they bring in a speaker to address the group. These events have been sponsored by Wesco Turf, a platinum partner with the Everglades GCSA. Past speakers include former GCSAA president Bob Randquist, CGCS, GCSAA chief executive officer Rhett Evans, and Toro's senior manager for sales and leadership development Steve Keating. Both Evans and Keating have also addressed the assistants in the Palm Beach GCSA.

Recently, the assistants had the opportunity to visit Pelican's Nest Golf Club where Jason Zimmerman, CGCS is engaged in some construction. Assistants will also get the chance to go back in summer and check on progress.

The third event for Everglades GCSA assistants is hosted by Matt Taylor, CGCS at the maintenance facility of Royal Poinciana Golf Club. The event is a very casual gathering centered around networking over a good old-fashioned barbecue. Matt invites industry representatives and all the local assistants to his place for the opportunity to mingle and get to know one another. This event has been wildly successful and includes a chipping and cornhole competitions and great food.

I use these examples to illustrate that there is an array of possibilities to engage assistant superintendents at the chapter level. These opportunities are not reserved for the big chapters but can easily be pursued by smaller chapters as well. I know that some may read this and say, "We can't get our superintendent members to attend meetings. How do you expect us to get their assistants to attend?"

I believe that if there are offerings tailored for the assistant superintendents they will show up. The events do not have to be all day events and can be done in such a fashion that it fits into today's busy schedules. In turn, I ask the question, "If we do nothing to engage our assistant superintendents, what will chapters look like 10 years from now?" Cultivate their energy and enthusiasm so they will someday take over leadership roles and continue to advance our great profession. ■

-Ralph Dain, CGCS is GCSAA regional representative in Florida. You can reach him at (785) 424-4306 or rdain@gcsaa.org.



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