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The **FLORIDA**
Green

SUMMER 2016



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Chasing Perfection will Lead You to Excellence

"Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection we can catch excellence." - Vince Lombardi.

The pursuit of perfection on our golf courses is a daunting task. Let me count some of the ways - fibrous root systems, 11.2 on the Stimpmeter, level tees, no disease or insect pressure, weed free, edged bunkers, firm conditions, lush green grass, fully staffed, flowers that bloom year round, golf carts that keep all four wheels on the path and golfers who understand that the 90 degree rule is not about air temperature. And of course, that's not all.

Still, as golf course superintendents and turf managers we strive for perfection on a daily basis. Schedules are written, products delivered and equipment is readied. It takes great communication and teamwork to implement the plan successfully...day after day, after day. We know that with so many moving parts and so many people to please, that a truly perfect day might never happen.

But with the support of our employees, vendors and a little kindness from Mother Nature, we can go a mighty long way towards delivering an enjoyable experience for our membership and golfers. When we do that we can rightfully take pride in the achievements of the team.

I have been proud of the achievements of the Florida GCSA over the past several years through the leadership of our executive director Jennifer Bryan and the dedicated board of directors. There are various sub-committees that work diligently behind the scenes to provide research updates, BMP training classes, membership recruitment and government relations.

In our own pursuit of perfection, the Florida GCSA recently updated our website and database to be able to communicate more effectively with members and to provide a simple platform for the local chapters to use. I encourage all members to log in to the website at www.floridagcsa.com and update their contact information, review upcoming events and stay in touch with recent news. All members will be able to register for events with the added benefit of using a credit card for all transactions.

Over the coming months there will be several BMP classes around the state that I encourage you to not only participate in, but to study for. The information in the BMP manual, which can be downloaded on the Florida GCSA website, has some valuable information whether you are a seasoned veteran or new to turf maintenance. The checklist at the back of the manual can be easily completed and presented to a green committee or upper management to recognize your efforts and to also highlight areas in need of improvement as you strive for the perfect maintenance facility.

Importantly, the BMP certification holds significant weight during our discussions with government agencies regarding blackout periods, fertilizer ordinances and water restrictions. It would be perfect to have all of our members BMP certified one day.

Perhaps you will have the perfect round of golf at the Florida GCSA annual golf event at Reunion Resort in Orlando early August. This event continues to grow with its combination of both individual and team competitions. Once again, the Florida GCSA will stage a roundtable with industry leaders providing insight into successful course renovations and effective communications. The entire event is a great - or should I say, perfect - networking opportunity for all attendees.

As much as we chase perfection at work, I encourage you to also strive for perfection outside the gates. It is important to be able to leave the worries of work behind when you lock the gates and return to the reason for it all - being the perfect role model, mentor, coach, sibling, spouse and parent at home.

May you pursue perfection this summer and achieve excellence. ■



David Dore-Smith



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Jennifer Bryan

By now you have received an email welcoming you to the new Florida GCSA website. I hope you have taken the opportunity to login and check it out. What is different about this website that you can't see, is that it is a real-time membership database for all the chapters. It is the first time we have had all our member data in one location, accessible by all 11 chapters and one that contains real time information.

Why is this important? Members no longer have to notify the local chapter then the state if they have moved, made a job change or want to update phone information. You, the member, can logon and manage all of this information in one location.

I know this is a new concept for many of you and change always comes with some resistance and a learning curve, but I urge you to take advantage of this new tool. The more people that use it, the more valuable it will become. First...

Get connected

The new site has a modern layout and design and is optimized to view in multiple devices. So login in today. Your username is your email and the default password is FGCSA2016. If you do not have an email, please call me and I will let you know what that information is. Also, if you are having any trouble logging on, please let me know. I am here to help.

Get organized

The website structure is more organized. We have moved to a system that recognizes each chapter as its own group within the website. Members will be able to review event registrations, invoices, membership status and more. If you are renewing your membership online, please be sure to select all the chapters you would like to join.

Superintendent members (Class A and SM) and assistant superintendents (Class C) each start with a base rate of \$115 for Class A and SM and \$90 for Class C. Each chapter's dues

rates are then calculated based on the chapters (groups) you have chosen. If you decide you would like to join an additional chapter after you have initially renewed, please contact the Florida GCSA office, and I will send you an amended invoice and add you to that group.

For vendor members that are purchasing membership packages (Platinum, Gold, etc.) where additional memberships are included, I have emailed promo codes to input to make the proper adjustment. If you are struggling with the promo code, please contact me and I will make the adjustments on the back side of the site and email you the invoice.

Get social

Connect with other members. Share job openings, resumes, pictures, blogs and more. This new site will become what you make it.

Jump in

We encourage you to explore the new site. Our membership cycle runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. There is a 30-day grace period for renewal. When renewing, if you choose to mail in a check, you have the option at check out to choose "check." Once you choose this option, your invoice will be mailed to you and also stored in your profile. Following are some navigational tips to help make your surfing experience more enjoyable.

Profile Home

This is where you will see your professional information, personal information, a list of the groups or chapters in which you are a member and any other information that is unique to you. Each section of this Profile Home page is editable. There is also a + symbol just under your name. Here you can mark your favorite pages, blogs, create additional pages and also store files. Your profile is your own – please set one up.

Manage Profile

Accessible from all the site pages is a green box labeled My Profile. In this box is an option to Manage Profile. This is where you manage all of your information. An important tool here is the Preferences option. The Preferences tool allows you to turn on or off all those email notifications you are receiving. You must go to this icon and adjust your own setting.

Also in the Manage Profile section, you can view all your invoice and payment history along with a list of any events you have registered for. This is a great tool for those of you who need to submit expense reports and need to produce a receipt. They are all stored here.

Further down this page are your options to customize your Favorites page, messaging to other members, store files, photos, etc. There is also the opportunity for you to submit your resume (control the visibility settings) and post job openings.

Groups

From the same green box I mentioned above, there is also a Groups option. Click on Groups and you will see all of the chapters in which you are a member. These are the chapter home pages. Just under the chapter name is a Group Pages tab. This tab links you to additional chapter information, for instance, chapter forms, newsletters, applications, etc. There is also a Directory and Features option. When you choose this you can complete a directory search, view the calendar, blogs, photo gallery, etc.

Register

New to the association? Would you like to be a member? Choose Register. You will be prompted to choose your classification; A, SM, C or Affiliate and then the chapter(s) you would like to join. An email confirmation will be sent to you upon approval. If additional information is required by a chapter to which you would like to join, that information will follow.

Calendar

The site has a statewide calendar and also has chapter specific calendars. Most events will have a Register tab just under the event name. Choose this tab to register for the event. The form will be specific to that event. If there is another way to register for that particular event, all information will be included. When registering, you will be able to either pay for the event at that time or choose the check option and have the invoice emailed to you. You can then print the invoice and submit payment via mail.

This is a lot of information and a lot of change. I understand that and I appreciate your willingness to embrace it. If you are getting frustrated with something, please call me. I want to help.

Managing your profile takes effort, whether or not you have to mail in a membership application or enter the information on-line. I appreciate your effort. We are only as good as the information we have.

We will continue to make tweaks and chapter pages will evolve as our new chapter boards learn their roles as group administrators. Please use this website as your tool to stay connected with what is going on in your association and to connect with other superintendents. It is our mission to unite superintendents across the state. We hope this tool will bring everyone a little closer. ■

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NORTH FLORIDA



Keeper of the Green winner Danny Aylwin with his wife Kathy.

Members of the North Florida GCSA have rallied in support of one of their own, Todd Mckibben from Palencia Golf Club in St. Augustine. The association has provided financial support to bring family members across the country from California to be with him as he battles illness. Born in Jacksonville, Mckibben is a Lake City graduate whose career includes time at Pablo Creek Golf Club, Amelia Island Plantation and Ocean Hammock Golf Resort.

Mckibben wrote an open letter to the association to thank you. "I would like to take this moment to say how grateful I am to have such a tight niche of friends and associates," he wrote in part. "I truly say, 'thank you.' I'm a very simple man but this means so much to me and, in time, my

kids. Many of you know my circumstances. To all that allowed my dear friend Matt Jones to pursue this gift for me, which prolongs my years ahead (I hope and pray), I will be indebted to you."

The support was possible because of the association's benevolent fund which was boosted by nearly \$750 thanks to the skins and fins tournament at Crane Lakes Golf and Country Club in Port Orange in May. Bill Esser was host superintendent with sponsorship support from Gary James of Howard Fertilizer, Chris McCranie of Upstart Products and Jayce Ramage of ProPlus.

In April, the association presented the Keeper of the Green award to veteran superintendent Danny Aylwin from Oceanside Country Club in Ormond Beach. Aylwin has been at the club more than 20 years. The award was presented at the Memorial Scholarship Golf Tournament hosted by John Lammrish at LPGA International Golf Club in Daytona Beach.

Money raised for scholarships at the tournament – which attracted 108 players – was topped up by some individual generosity. Winners of both the low gross and low net divisions of the tournament donated their winnings (\$800) back to the scholarship fund. The winner of the 50/50 drawing also donated \$100 to the fund and the corn hole tournament winner also donated his winnings. The association award scholarships of \$1,500 to Brandt Arsenault, son of Ken Arsenault; Riley Jones, daughter of Randall Jones;

Marshall LaFrance, son of Steve LaFrance; and Sierra Maguire, daughter of Andrew Maguire.

Chris Radcliffe, who was a member of the low net winning team, won a 2016 Cushman Hauler 1200 valued at more than \$9,500 with a hole-in-one. Formerly a spray technician at Ponte Vedra Inn and Club he is now assistant superintendent at Talking Stick Club in Scottsdale, AZ. Larry Gallagher won a 55-inch high-definition television in the putting contest.

There was a small but enthusiastic turnout for the first annual inshore fishing tournament in St. Augustine in June. The association has a number of logoed t-shirts from the tournament that are still available for sale. To order email Betty Hooten at NFGCSA@yahoo.com.

At press time the association was preparing for its annual meeting and later the annual Fall Classic at Amelia Island Plantation on September 30 and October 1.

CALUSA

The Calusa GCSA heads towards the new golf season with an unchanged leadership roster. No officer was up for renewal at the association's annual meeting in June and no new candidates were put forward. The meeting was at Legends Golf and Country Club in Fort Myers with host superintendent Jeff Burgoyne, CGCS.

There was a small turn out for a family fun night at the Fort Myers Miracle baseball

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game on July 1. A lot of people were already busy getting ready for Fourth of July weekend. A much larger participation is expected for the Ryder Cup-style challenge with the Everglades GCSA at Old Corkscrew Golf Club in Estero on August 31. Superintendents will play the Ryder Cup format and vendors will compete in low net and low gross competitions with an 8.30am shotgun start.

FLORIDA WEST COAST

Hopes are on the rise that the Florida West Coast GCSA is headed for a new period of prosperity. After several years of sparse participation, waning interest and an unsuccessful effort to merge with the Suncoast GCSA, some new blood on the board and new energy is generating some positive signs.

One of the new board members, Eric Dixon from Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf Club in Clearwater, led an effort to secure a \$1,500 grant from GCSAA to help recruit new members to the Florida West Coast GCSA. The money, from GCSAA's chapter outreach grant program, will also be used to encourage facility owners and general managers to support their superintendents participating in local chapter activities.

Nearly 70 members attended the association's annual meeting at East Lake Woodlands Country Club in Oldsmar where Mickey Subotic was host superintendent. External vice-president Andy Nieswender from Belleair Country Club in Belleair says Dixon's energy and that of new vice-president Scott Corwin from Renaissance Vinoy Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg has been instrumental in breathing new life into the association.

"We are seeing a lot of superintendents at meetings that we haven't seen come along before and we're also seeing the return of some that we hadn't seen for a long time," Nieswender says. "For the time being at least there is a little bit of rejuvenation going on."

Kevin Sunderman from Isla Del Sol yacht and Country Club in St. Petersburg will



The Florida West Coast GCSA and the Suncoast GCSA presented a \$5,000 check for turfgrass research to the Florida GCSA. From left, Suncoast GCSA's Nick Kearns, Florida GCSA president David Dore-Smith and secretary John Curran with Florida West Coast GCSA's Andy Neiswender.

stay on as president as the association works to re-establish a strong foundation.

In April, more than 20 superintendent members and a similar number of vendor members took part in the Hickory Shaft Golf Challenge at Largo Golf Course with host superintendent Gerald Marquardt, who also happened to win the event. Title sponsor for the event was Site One Landscapes and Steve Hritsko who provided the hickory shaft clubs for the event.

Speaker for the event was John Mascaro from Turf-Tec International. He did a presentation on the history of golf course maintenance which was a perfect tie-in to the theme of the golf challenge. John does the photo quiz in Sports Turf and GCM magazine and several of his images really got the room stirring as superintendents recalled their own

stories from the past.

Each golfer was given a mesh pattern golf ball to play with that was a modern replica of a 1935 ball. Everyone struggled on the first few holes to figure out the difference between a niblick and a mashie. A few

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members wore outfits that would have been worn when hickory shaft clubs were being played. This event has the potential to be an annual event.

The next scheduled event is a roundtable discussion on August 18 at the new \$2.3 million maintenance facility at Belleair Country Club. This event will run from 1pm to 4pm beginning with a tour of the facility followed by the roundtable.

SEVEN RIVERS

The Seven Rivers GCSA hosted another successful Jeff Hayden Envirotron Golf Classic in April with more than 280 participants. The event, hosted by David Court, CGCS and World Woods Golf Club, was presented by Golf Ventures. The facility was in excellent condition for the event which was a huge success so a big “thank you” to our sponsors and participants who make this event the largest turfgrass research fundraiser in the state.

Over the years, proceeds from the event have been used to purchase equipment for the Envirotron Laboratory and the G.C. Horn Turfgrass Research facility at the Plant Science Research and Education Unit at the University of Florida campuses in Gainesville and Citra. The event has also contributed funds towards numerous research projects that have benefitted golf course superintendents throughout the state. More than \$1 million has been raised over the history of the event to help ensure that Florida turfgrass remains bright and green.

We have numerous meetings coming up over the next few months. In August, we head over to The Villages to Belle Glade Golf Club and in September we go to Rainbow’s End Golf Club. October is a busy month with the North Central Florida Turfgrass Field Day at the PSREU in Citra, the Pro-Superintendent hosted by Stone Creek Golf Club and the regular monthly chapter meeting at Ocala Golf Club. More information on these events will follow.

- Andy Jorgensen, *On Top of the World.*

SUNCOAST



Suncoast Scramble winners Jeff Wright of Statewide Turf with Dale Taylor, Tim Beckwith, Eddie MacDonald and Matt Pivko all from The Oaks Club.

More than 100 people listened to an excellent presentation from Global Golf’s Henry Delozier at this year’s Suncoast Scramble at The Oaks Club in Osprey. He talked about superintendents creating a legacy at their facility and his message hit home with many of the guys and also some of the general managers who were in the room. His main point was that superintendents should create and manage a multi-year agronomic plan, instead of just managing moment to moment.

We raised more than \$30,000 thanks to the great participation and ever-generous support from our vendors and sponsors. Some of this money supports turfgrass research efforts. We were able to combine with the Florida West Coast GCSA earlier in the year to make a \$5,000 donation to the Florida GCSA’s turfgrass research fund. The Scramble also helps us keep costs to a minimum for our other events and activities throughout the year.

We signed up several new members at our member-guest event at Heritage Oaks Golf and Country Club in Sarasota in June. Current members were encouraged to bring along someone they knew was qualified to become a member but hadn’t yet done so. Those guests, maybe 10 in all, were able to participate free of charge

so they could get a taste of what the association is about. We welcome those guys who did sign up on the day and hopefully we will see more of all you at future meetings.

The following week we had more than 20 members travel by bus to St. Petersburg to watch the Tampa Bay Rays take on the Boston Red Sox. A few more made the trip by car. By all accounts this was a very enjoyable event helped along by the fact that the Rays won 4-0.

- Nick Kearns, *The Oaks Club.*



Henry Delozier

THE 2016 SUNCOAST SCRAMBLE



*Presented by the Suncoast GCSA
With thanks to our host superintendent Nick Kearns and The Oaks Club*

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PALM BEACH



New Palm Beach GCSA president Dan Elchert from Woodfield Country Club with outgoing president Shannon Wheeler from Wycliffe Golf and Country Club.

The Palm Beach GCSA annual meeting was at The Seagate Country Club in Delray Beach in July. The annual meeting was attended by 67 superintendents and affiliate members. Thanks to host superintendent Nate Watkin.

Upon completion of the standing committee reports, the business portion of the meeting concluded with the election of new officers and directors for the upcoming year. The slate of candidates was approved by the group as presented and is as follows:

President: **Dan Elchert**, Woodfield Country Club; vice-president: **John Spiwak**, Eastpointe Country Club; treasurer: **Parker Ferren**, Boca Woods Country Club; secretary: **Robert Anderson**, Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club; external vice-president: **Steve Wright** CGCS, Pine Tree Golf Club; past-president: **Shannon Wheeler**, Wycliffe Golf and Country Club.

Directors: **George Kervern**, St. Andrews Country Club; **Nate Watkin**, The Seagate Country Club; **Ryan Swilley**, Gulfstream Golf Club; **Brett Sanderson**, The Country Club at Mirasol.

As new president of the association my main goal is to uphold our mission statement which reads: "The Palm Beach Golf Course Superintendents Association is committed to advocating the role of golf



Golf winners at the annual meeting were Bill Jeffrey, CGCS, Deron Zendt, David Graham and Dave Oliver.

course maintenance professionals through education, professional development and environmental stewardship while promoting camaraderie and fellowship through the game of golf."

By the end of my term as president, I expect to have streamlined and organized the administration of the chapter at the board level. I would like to leave behind standardized administrative platforms and communication processes, minimizing any learning curve as individuals move through the different board positions. Much of this will be possible through utilization of the of the new Florida GCSA website. I believe that all of this will allow us as chapter officials to focus our efforts more on events and education that will engage and activate our membership.

A standing tradition at the annual meeting is the distribution and presentation of our scholarship awards. Scholarships are awarded to dependents of Palm Beach GCSA members who successfully complete the application process and meet the academic requirements.

This year's recipients were:

Mitchell Jaskela, daughter of Buzz Jaskela, Buzz Jaskela Landscape architects

Jeanna Heater, daughter of Mark Heater, Addison Reserve Country Club

Tatum Balko, daughter of Larry Balko, Biff Inc.

Lauren Pardron, daughter of George Redshaw, Boca Dunes Golf and Country Club

Charlene Balko, daughter of Larry Balko, Biff Inc.

Jessica Bailey, daughter of Mike Bailey, Winfield Solutions.

Meghan Sprankle, daughter of Jason Sprankle, Boca Woods Country Club.

Following lunch, 43 superintendents and affiliate members participated in the annual golf event. Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club won the low gross superintendent division. Bill Jeffrey, CGCS from IGM won low net in the superintendent division. In the vendor divisions Dave Oliver of Golf Ventures won low gross and David Graham of Unifirst won low net.

Money for the scholarships comes from the annual Future of Golf Tournament, which was at Eastpointe Country Club in Palm Beach Gardens in early June. John Spiwak presented excellent conditions as host superintendent. We had 39 teams compete and along with generous vendor support, we were able to net about \$30,000 to help fund scholarships, research and youth golf efforts like The First Tee of the Palm Beaches.

Later in June, we had our annual fishing tournament out of Blowing Rocks Marina in Jupiter. This year's event had 18 boats

registered for the one-day kingfish, dolphin and wahoo tournament. Good crowds turned out for both Friday's captain's meeting and weigh-in festivities on the Saturday.

Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Country Club reports that seas came up and fishing wasn't the best but more than \$7,000 in prize money was paid including, for the first time, awards to the top woman angler, top junior as well as the mystery fish (tuna). Great donations for door prizes and silent auction items netted almost \$4,000 to give back to the association. This year's proceeds were earmarked for The First Tee of the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach scholarship funds and Florida GCSA research needs.



Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Country Club with one of his catches in the fishing tournament.

Winners included –

Top Boat: 1st - Worth The Wait - captain **Mike McDaniel**, Hector Turf; 2nd - Cajun Cat, captain **Cody Boutte**, Loblolly Pines Golf Club.

Top Dolphin: 1st - Down N Dirty, captain **Chris Gast**, Martin Downs Golf Club; 2nd – SandTastic, captain **Andy Arena**, Florida Superior Sand; 3rd - Grady White, captain **Linda Hall**.



Linda Hall skipped the third placed boat in the dolphin section of the annual fishing tournament.

Top King: Get Sum, captain **Craig Meret**, Green Way.

Mystery Fish and Top New Boat: Sea Par Tee, captain **Jason Bagwell**, Gleneagles Country Club.

Top Woman: **Andi DeYoung**.

Top Junior: **Zack McDaniel**.

-Dan Elchert, Woodfield Country Club.

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EVERGLADE

Stuart Bothe from Vanderbilt Country Club in Naples is the new president of the Everglades GCSA. Bothe was elected in July at the association's annual meeting at Island Country Club on Marco Island where Wayne Kappauf, CGCS was host superintendent. More than 90 members attended the event.

Bothe takes over from Bryce Koch from Cypress Lake Country Club in Fort Myers but Koch did manage to retain his grip on the association golf championship. Koch shot a round of 76 to win his fourth chapter championship out of the past five years.

In June the association hosted the second stage of its golf course construction series for assistant superintendents at Pelican's Nest Golf Club in Bonita Springs. Jason Zimmerman, CGCS hosted the event which featured a two-hour tour of renovation work with golf course architect Jan Bel Jan. Attendees then got to play on Pelican's Nests other golf course from the scoring tees with a longest hole of about 280 yards.

The 2016 Poa Classic and G.C. Horn Memorial Tournament were huge successes in May. This year's event was headquartered at the Marriott Resort on Marco Island while the long-time host venue Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club undergoes a complete renovation. The golf tournaments were played on courses in excellent condition thanks to the work of Todd Evans, director of grounds at The Rookery, and Stuart Wiseley at Hammock Bay. The scramble event on the Saturday morning was sold out with 144 players and 90 competed in the G.C. Horn on the Friday.



Ben Catlett of Trigon Turf Services teamed with Scott Hornish, Tyler Johanson and Coleman Torgersen all from Royal Poinciana Golf Club.



Jason Frank of Harrell's, Tim Orton of Koch Agronomic Services and Matt Taylor, CGCS from Royal Poinciana Golf Club.



Scramble winners were Pete Bain and Bill Marchan of Bain Sealcoat and Jim and Jimmy Glase of Glase Golf.



Bryce Koch with the Everglades GCSA golf championship trophy he won for fourth time in five years.



Pictured left-Everglades GCSA board members at the luau on the beach: Aaron Ohloff, Wyndemere Country Club; Eric Simpson, Collier's Reserve Country Club; Stuart Bothe, Vanderbilt Country Club; Wayne Kappauf, CGCS Island Country Club; Nick von Hoffen, CGCS Collier's Reserve Country Club; Robert Toski, The Andersons; Bryce Koch, Cypress Lake Country Club; Jason Zimmerman, CGCS Pelican's Nest Golf Club; Sam Mueller, Vasari Country Club; Matt Taylor, CGCS Royal Poinciana Golf Club; and Matt Gaudet, CGCS The Forest Country Club.



Stuart Bothe



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SOUTH FLORIDA



South Florida GCSA president Rolando "Roly" Molina was up for re-election at the annual meeting late July.

At press time the South Florida GCSA was getting ready for its annual meeting at Trump National Doral Miami in Doral. President Rolando "Roly" Molina from the Country Club of Miami, vice-president Bryan Singleton from Biltmore Golf Course in Coral Gables and secretary-treasurer Rod Zimmerman from Seven Bridges Golf Club in Sunrise were all up for re-election. Dr. John Cisar was to deliver education on pest and cultural management on bermudagrass.

In May, Laurie Bland from the City of Miami Springs hosted an event at Curtiss Mansion. Curtiss Mansion was the home of Glenn Hammond Curtiss, visionary aviator, inventor and developer. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 and underwent a multi-million dollar rehabilitation and now features an interactive technology-based educational center focusing on the inventions and contributions of Curtiss and others.

"I would like to thank Laurie Bland and the entire staff at Miami Springs for hosting our May event," Molina says. "The venue for the meeting at the Curtiss Mansion was both refreshing and informative. Guest speaker Lynn Griffith delivered a talk on interpreting water quality reports and how to correct water problems.

In March, the association partnered with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to present the TurfEXPO. "After a year off, attendance

was well above our expectations," Molina says. "I would like to send out a very heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in hosting, planning, sponsoring, volunteering and attending. We were encouraged by the turn out and are excited with the future plans for future research and the development of the extension's site."

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Terry Stephenson from Monarch Country Club in Palm City is now president of the Central Florida GCSA. Stephenson was elected at the association's annual meeting at Black Bear Golf Club in Eustis in July. Ken Maltby was host superintendent for the meeting and golf event that followed.

Stephenson is in his 34th year in golf course maintenance and spent the larger share of that time in Texas. His last position in Texas was at Bear Ridge Golf Club which is the home course for Baylor University. Before taking on the job at Monarch Country Club six years ago, he was superintendent at Wekiva Golf Club near Longwood.

Stephenson says the board is considering a number of changes to try and grow membership and improve the member experience. One idea being looked at is establishing the association calendar a year out to give members every opportunity to be available. There is also a suggestion to standardize the cost of meetings regardless of the venue. "We are looking at ways to make things

the best they can be for the overall membership," Stephenson says.

This year's Crowfoot Open will be contested on December 9.



Terry Stephenson

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2016 North Florida Memorial Scholarship Tournament



2016 North Florida GCSA Keeper of the Green Award Winner:

Danny Aylwin, golf course superintendent at Oceanside Country Club in Ormond Beach, pictured here with his wife, Kathy.

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Joe Limberg of presenting sponsor Hector Turf, accepts a gift from Matthew Boyd, who was president at the time of the Blue Pearl.



Ralph Dain of GCSAA, John Curran, Greg Pheneger and Ken Weyandt, all from John's Island Club, were low net winners at the Blue Pearl.



Karl Schmidt of Legacy Turf, Matt Shaffer from High Ridge Country Club and Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club won the gross event at the Blue Pearl.

The Blue Pearl Charity Golf Tournament continues to be an enormously successful event. Close to \$40,000 was raised at this year's Blue Pearl at John's Island where Greg Pheneger is golf course maintenance director and John Curran hosted the tournament on the West Course. The amount raised is consistent with recent years allowing the Treasure Coast GCSA to continue supporting local schools, research and environmental efforts.

In June, Scott Bell from Red Stick Golf Club in Vero Beach became new president of the Treasure Coast GCSA taking over from Matt Boyd from Orchid Island. Bell was elected for what is his second term as president at the annual meeting The Club at Pointe West, also in Vero Beach, where Christian Millican was host superintendent. The USGA Green

Section's new southeast region director Steve Kammerer provided education.

Bell was also president of the association back in 1990 when he was maintaining bentgrass greens at Bent Pine Golf Club in Vero Beach. He joked about that fact in a note to members after the election reciting a list of things that have changed in the time since. He went on to say some important elements of the profession have stayed the same.

"Something that has not changed is the camaraderie and respect that we all enjoy as golf course superintendents," he wrote. "We are fortunate to be in an industry where we all try to help each other out whether it be a fungicide on a Saturday morning, an odd irrigation part that is otherwise two weeks away, advice on a problem or a round of golf on a Friday with three other superintendents. I consider myself to be very fortunate to have made the friends that I have over the years through our association."

Bell thanked outgoing president Matt Boyd for his service and said there was a strong likelihood that next year's Blue Pearl "will be returning to the south end of our chapter's boundary for the first time in many years." He suggested possible move to golf or education only meetings next year "but probably not both in one day. "I have gotten feedback that some folks just don't like to be gone for a full day," he said.

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Special thanks to Greg Pheneger, director of golf course maintenance, and John Curran, West Course superintendent, and John's Island Club for hosting this year's event.



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The Grass Ceiling: WHY SO FEW WOMEN BECOME GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

Originally, this story wasn't going to center on women in golf course maintenance. Instead, it was intended to be a feature on Kirsten Conover's work on the major renovation at Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. The course, long time host of the Everglades GCSA's Poa Classic and G.C. Horn Memorial Tournament, is undergoing a \$4.5 million renovation due for completion in December.

Certainly there would have been mention of how under-represented women are in the business. But the focus would have been on the transformation of the historic property and what those changes would mean in the way Conover went about her work.

But then something happened. She was let go after nine years at the club including five as superintendent. Pink slips are an all too common occupational hazard for superintendents and often arrive unexpectedly. Even some of the best have scars to prove it.

What set Conover's departure aside was the fact that it meant an already tiny hole in the grass ceiling for women in the profession was now smaller still. Decades after the first women began taking care of golf courses, they remain a rarity in the field. Of more than 9,000 superintendents in GCSAA, only about 100 - or a handful of clippings over one percent - are women.

And this is in a time when a woman - Hillary Clinton - will contest a U.S. presidential election for the first time in history, when a woman - Diana Murphy - leads the USGA for the first time in history and when a woman - Suzie Whaley - serves as an officer of the PGA of America for the first time in history.

Nearly a decade since GCSAA established its diversity task force to promote minority inclusion the needle has not moved on the percentage of women superintendents. "I definitely think there

should be more women in the profession," says Nancy Miller, CGCS from Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club in Port Charlotte. "I don't know why there's not. Is it maybe because it's a science and engineering field and there are fewer girls in those fields? Is it because golf as a sport is thought to be this game for white males? I don't know."

For her part, Conover suspects a major disincentive is simply the hours the job demands. "You could live on the golf course because there's absolutely always something that could be done," she says. "You could literally live the job. It's so demanding on your time that I think it's even difficult for men to have families, let alone women."

Indeed it is tougher for a mother of an infant to get home late or leave on the spur of the moment after hours because something cropped up on the golf course - which of course happens often. As Conover says, "So much of the job is putting out fires. There's so much of, 'Sorry I have to miss the birthday party but something's blown up and I have to go fix it.' This profession is hard on marriages."

Of those women in the profession who do have children, Conover suspects the needs of their family limit their ability to climb the career ladder. "There's not a whole lot of research or evidence out there to back this up but I think very few women are in the high-powered country club roles because they already have so much to balance," she says. "I think that's a choice they consciously make."

Perhaps underlining the above points, Conover is not married and has no children while Miller only got into the profession as a second career after her children had gone to college. And while Miller's role is very much hands on, "It's not a high pressure situation," she says. "I have a very small staff so I'm out there mowing, aerifying, topdressing, all of it."

With just a handful of women in the profession in Florida, it might be reasonable to think they would be drawn to form their own sub-community, if not support group. But at least for Miller and Conover that's not the case. On the contrary, neither is certain they have even met.

Geography may have something to do with it but a more likely factor is that as superintendents, they've simply been busy enough. Just as importantly both want to be known and respected as good superintendents. "I would rather be thought of as just someone who grows grass rather than seen as a girl or a guy," Conover says. But when you are the only "girl" in a crowd of men, she explains, "Yeah, it can be daunting."

Miller says the sense of being the "odd one out" is undeniable. "It can be tough when you're a woman walking into a room at a meeting full of guys who mostly know each other," she says. "They're talking about hunting or fishing, things they already have in common. But I don't fish or hunt. It can be hard to break into that group."

Conover at least can talk fishing. She and her boyfriend Cody are often out on the water. A retired second-degree black belt in karate, she now does kickboxing so martial arts would be another potential conversation topic.

To overcome her apparent lack of connection, Miller threw herself into association service, first with the Calusa GCSA and then with the Florida GCSA, serving as a chapter to delegate to GCSAA, then eventually becoming the state association's first woman president in 2012. "I thought if I got on a board at least I would get to know six or seven of the guys," she says. Her network now extends not just across the state but across the country because of her work as a delegate to GCSAA.

Miller says few hurdles to a woman becoming a superintendent were ever "overt." "Although I do know it's why I missed out on one assistant's position," she says. "It was at an ultra high-end private club. They only had three women members so they weren't real high on equality. It's probably just as well I didn't get the job."

Earlier, she interned under Mark Kuhns, CGCS at Oakmont Country Club where there were accommodations for male interns but "no living quarters on site for women." When Kuhns later moved to Baltusrol Golf Club and revamped the entire maintenance department, he built dormitories for men and for women. "He told me he did it because of what happened with me," Miller says. "He remembered. He said, 'That's why I did it.' If my experience had even a little piece of anything to do with that then that's a great thing."

Conover, who also came to golf course maintenance as a second career - after a dual role as biology teacher and athletic trainer in Oregon - also has an intern story. She interviewed at three courses for a position. "One guy was only going to let me be the flower girl at the clubhouse," she says. "He's like, 'That would be a great job for you.' And I'm like, 'No, I need to do more than that.'"

Some years later, looking for warmer climes, Conover was all but told she had a job as an assistant at one course in Florida. She was working under GCSAA past-president Tommy Witt, CGCS in Alabama at the time but had driven down for an interview.



Kirsten Conover

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“This guy told me I needed to think seriously about packing my bags and moving to Florida because he thought I was the one for the job,” she recalls. “So I went home and waited for the call, and waited, and waited. Eventually he calls and says, ‘I’m really sorry but I started thinking I’m not sure the guys on my crew are going to listen to a female.’ That was the first time it really hit me.”

That superintendent did offer her a lead on another job though and she ended up at Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples, ironically enough taking care of flowers. One year she planted 22,000 annuals. But by now, Conover had seen enough of the profession to know that one role often leads to another and soon she was running the crew on weekends.

“There have been situations in golf where I’ve run into people that don’t take me seriously because I’m a woman,” she says. “It can be awkward. I do have to be cognizant of that. As someone who hires people, I say, ‘Hey, I’m a girl. Are you going to have problems listening to me?’ And you can usually tell if they are going to.”

But not always.

After a stint as an assistant to Matt Taylor, CGCS at Royal Poinciana Golf Club, Conover moved to Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. A few years into the job she became superintendent and a previously comfortable working relationship with the equipment technician quickly soured.

“We didn’t have a knockdown drag out but it ended up being a not very pretty situation,” she says. “I won because I was the boss and he was gone. You hate to have that happen. We’d worked together for five years before I became superintendent but suddenly it wasn’t okay because I was the boss now.”

Like Miller before her, Conover stepped up to serve her local chapter as a director for the Everglades GCSA. “The guys I’m on the board with they’ll sometimes say, ‘Lady and gentlemen.’ I’m not someone who gets hung up on that but I appreciate that they do that because at least they’re aware. But at the same time when they don’t, I think, ‘Oh, they do see me as one of the guys. Great, let’s talk about verticutting or topdressing.’”

One thing neither Conover nor

Miller can speak to is what it’s like trying to break into golf course maintenance as a female out of school for the first time. “For the most part, most of the guys I’ve been around have been okay working with a woman,” Miller says. “But maybe that’s because I wasn’t a 21- or 22-year-old kid.” While neither has set out to change the status quo in the industry, they agree that if their example helps make it more likely that other women will follow them down the superintendent path then that’s a good thing. ■



Nancy Miller

**Since this story was written, Kirsten Conover has taken the role of integrated pest management specialist with Tim Hiers, CGCS at The Club at Mediterra in Naples.*

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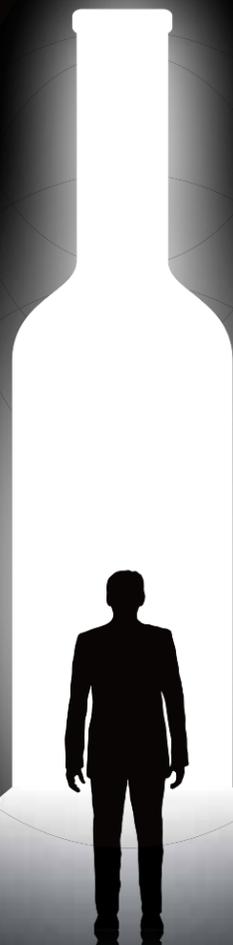


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Everybody has an Escape: THE JOB, STRESS AND BOOZE

Editor's note: In keeping with the principles of his recovery program, the following report does not identify the subject, his employer or the recovery program itself.

They say you sometimes have to get to the end of the road you're on before you can really turn the corner. For one Florida GCSA member, the end of that road was marked, quite literally, by a closed security gate at his club on the east coast. As superintendent at the plush private facility, it might seem reasonable enough that he was trying to get on property after hours to check on a pump he'd left running.

But when the security guard on duty didn't recognize him that was one thing. That the superintendent was drunk was something else altogether. Police were called and he was arrested. A couple of days later the club let him go. That was five years ago this June. The superintendent hasn't had a drink since.

"Everybody has their own way of coping with the stress of the job," he says. "Everybody has an escape. Mine was definitely booze."

When he started work at the facility in 2005 he felt like he'd arrived in more ways than one. After nearly 20 years toiling at various courses in another state, this was the big one, a significant leap in prestige and pay. It was the kind of job many superintendents would be comfortable looking back on as the pinnacle of their career.

"I was high on the hog there for awhile," he admits. "I felt like nobody could touch me."

Of course, with that steep rise in rewards came a commensurate increase in responsibility. In addition to multiple courses on premium golfing terrain, he was also in charge of everything from tennis courts and grounds to the beach areas.

"There was always so much going on," he says. "I felt like I was run ragged all the time. I couldn't tell if I was coming or going. That's when it all started getting a little crazy, man. I'd come out of a green committee meeting and head straight to a bar. If there'd been complaints I'd need a drink. If they said the place was in great shape I'd need to celebrate."

Eventually, he was following the same routine even on days when there was no green committee meeting. "It became a bit of a free for all," he says. "I started staying out at night. I stopped answering my phone when people would call looking for me. I'd crash at a buddy's house. I never drank at work but there were times when I'd come in the next day still affected. It's what I did."

In retrospect, he was skimming by. His courses remained in great shape but the margin for error was narrowing year by year. He appeared to cross that line on a trip to the Carolinas with his corporate boss to negotiate a major capital equipment purchase. They were hosted in plush accommodations with a refrigerator "full of every kind of beer you can think of in both regular and lite and a table of vodkas with names you couldn't even pronounce."

"I had myself a good old time. I was in seventh heaven," he says. But his boss, who'd traveled from New Jersey, was less impressed. "He looked at me and said, 'You're stinking drunk. And we're here to do a purchase that will run anywhere up to \$4 million. If I didn't like you so much I'd put you on a plane right now and fire your backside.' He told me I needed to get into a program."

The boss's ultimatum was a big red light but the superintendent still wasn't quite at the end of the road even then. "When I got back I did start seeing a counselor...for stress issues," he says. "That's what I called it. I didn't have a drinking problem. I'd tell myself, 'Everybody drinks like me.'"

But of course they don't and people who cared a lot about him, not just his corporate boss, had tried to point that out. One, a superintendent colleague, told him that if he didn't get his life together he'd be mowing fairways for \$10 an hour. That friend was right.

After losing his dream job that's exactly what this highly-qualified, highly-experienced superintendent found himself doing for exactly that amount - for an entire year. With the precipitous drop in income, he and his wife were forced to move out of their home and rent a "much smaller, much older" home. "It sucked," he says. "We were using food stamps."

Today, he says that year was a kind of penance he needed to serve and a time to recalibrate his life. "Something clicked" on the night he found himself shoved into the back of a police car. The flashing blue lights told him this was finally the end of the road. To go any further was to risk going off the cliff altogether. Within days he got himself into a 12-step program and has been part of it ever since.

He worked to put his marriage back together. Divorce papers were filed at one point. And eventually he heard about a spray tech position at another facility, about 10 miles from his old job. Then the superintendent position opened up. Management at the club knew of his superintendent experience and asked him if he was interested in the job.

They also asked him what happened to his previous job.

He was up front. "I just told them I couldn't stop drinking," he says. "I told them that now I was in a program and I wasn't drinking anymore. The GM said to me, 'If you're here and you

need to go to a meeting, you go.' So I knew that I had their support and that meant a lot."

He has been at his new facility for three years now. He may not have as many holes to care for as he used to but a superintendent's job is still a superintendent's job. There are expectations, budget and staffing limitations, deadlines, Mother Nature and all kinds of other stresses. Not once though has he used any of that laundry list as an excuse to drink.

Even when he lost both parents within the space of a few weeks this summer, the superintendent maintained his sobriety through his new perspective.

"I used to drink if there was an irrigation leak," he says. "And I'd tell people they'd drink too if they had my job. The job now is still the same in many ways but I have a different way of living life. I have an acceptance of things I can't change. Instead of trying to drink them away I'm being honest with myself. I'm able to see God has a purpose. Now I live life on life's terms and my job is so much more rewarding and fulfilling. My relationship with my wife is better than it has ever been." ■

Heed the Signs, Get Help

As a recovering alcoholic, the superintendent who is subject of the accompanying story encourages colleagues to look for warning signs and seek help. "I know for a fact there are guys who are struggling and some who may be," he says. "Ours is a stressful profession. I've had guys say to me, 'I'm so happy to hear that you quit drinking. I wish I could.' I tell them, 'You can.' They can call me and whatever we talk about stays between us."

But, he says, the warning signs are sometimes difficult to accept. "If your wife, or your boss or you co-workers tell you they think you might have a problem, you more than likely do have a problem," he says. "If you find yourself getting drunk at events, if you play a round of golf and you're worried about driving home afterwards, you more than likely have a problem."

The best measuring stick on whether there is an issue, he says, is to simply "take a look at your record." "What happens when you drink? Look at your actions and how they're affecting people. They don't have to tell you straight out you have a problem. Are they constantly getting upset with you?"

The superintendent says he has many good friends in the golf industry and has made many more through the 12-step program he participates in to this day. "It's funny you know, the very first meeting I went to this guy comes up and says, 'Hey buddy, it's really good to see you.' I said, 'But I don't know you.' And he said, 'No, you don't. But I've been hearing about you for two years.' That was pretty humbling."

“Nothing Flashy” *But Highly Effective*

That’s John Lammrish at LPGA International

By Trent Bouts

In space, Einstein tells us, the shortest distance between two points is actually a curve. Getting from point A to point B is not always a straight line on earth either. Consider the path that John Lammrish traversed to get where he is now.

There was the geographic yo-yoing that took him from Kentucky, down to Florida, up to Ohio then back down to Florida. There was also some professional zig-zagging. At one time an avid and talented baseball player, he pondered becoming a butcher like his father before going to school to be an accountant. Ultimately, he became one of the most respected golf course superintendents in northern Florida.

Not even Einstein could have seen that coming.

Today, Lammrish is director of golf course maintenance over 36 holes at LPGA International in Daytona Beach, which hosts the final stage of Q-school for the LPGA Tour each fall. For the past two years, he has also served as regional superintendent for ClubCorp with oversight of another six courses.

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“ Do you have a good quote that I could but here? Or I can move the photo up and focus on him more... Quote to go here, Quote to go here ”



With those combined roles, he's not just one of the most respected practitioners of his craft, Lammrsh is also one of the busiest. Moreover, at press time, he was in line to become president of the North Florida GCSA. Not bad for someone who describes himself as a "nothing flashy, blue collar kind of guy."

But then humility, like a strong work ethic, is often a byproduct of small town upbringings like the one Lammrsh experienced in Flemingsburg, KY. Little more than a dot on the map north-east of Lexington, Flemingsburg was the kind of place where people learn to do what needs to be done because there's no one else to call. The family owned a slaughterhouse processing cattle, hogs and, in-season, "a lot of deer." Naturally, Lammrsh and his brother helped out.

"That's how it was in the '70s and '80s growing up there," Lammrsh says. "My brother was six years older than me. If I was my brother's age I may have found myself following my dad's footsteps. I had an interest in it in my teen years. It was a very successful business but it was a lot of work."

If the older brother was in the way, as it were, back then, a few years later he became the one pointing the way. After two years studying accounting, the younger Lammrsh was so uninspired he withdrew and followed his girlfriend, his high school sweetheart, to Florida, working construction for six months. Then he moved to Cincinnati where his brother had relocated.

"I stayed with my brother for a little while, and at one point I'm like, 'Okay, I've got to get a job,'" Lammrsh recalls. "He said, 'You like golf. There are a lot of nice golf courses here in Cincinnati.' First golf course I went to hired me for summer help."

Some say you should find what you love and then find a way to make a living at it. In that respect, Lammrsh had finally arrived at point A on his career map. He'd fallen in love with golf around the same time he was "burning out" on baseball. Between his junior and senior year he was on the golf course from "daylight to dark." "I loved it that much," he says.

He could play some too, at one time carrying a two handicap. But he knew early on he would "never be a pro." Now he was learning that golf course maintenance could keep him in the game and out of the office. "I would not have been a good cubicle guy," he laughs.

The man who hired Lammrsh as seasonal help at Hyde Park Country Club in Cincinnati was Jim Riesenberg. Riesenberg was a Penn State graduate, who eyed something in the kid from Kentucky who wasn't exactly lost but admits he lacked direction. "I was probably a little less focused than some," Lammrsh says. "Jim was the person who lit the fire early in my life. He is who I attribute with sparking the interest that got me into this field."

Energized, Lammrsh packed his bags and headed south once again. This time, he traveled to what was then Lake City Community College, to enroll in the turfgrass program. His path in life was opening up and that girlfriend, Virginia, would become his wife, now of 26 years. They have a daughter Kasey, 23, who



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just graduated from the University of Central Florida and a son Tyler, 18, is finishing high school.

Lammrsh says his wife was the daughter of a dairy farmer and so learned long before what a true full-time job entailed. As such, she has accepted the demands of his job and been a rock of support throughout his career.

During his time at Lake City, Lammrsh interned with Greg Plotner, CGCS then at Tampa Palms Golf and Country Club, and Cecil Johnson at Avila Golf and Country Club. "They were great," Lammrsh says. "They let me do everything that I asked them to let me do from the mechanics side to the chemical side to irrigation. We were renovating nine holes at Avila and we put in every inch of pipe. What an experience but I'm glad I was 21 years old at the time!"

Lammrsh graduated from Lake City in May, 1990. Less than three months later he landed his first superintendent's job at Cypress Creek Golf Club in Ruskin where he learned a lot about life on a small budget. "It was a good fit for me though," he says. "Smaller golf course, single owner. I wouldn't recommend that to everybody but in that situation it worked for me."

In 1993, he moved to Orange Lake Resort in Kissimmee. It was more of a leap than a step. The resort had 27 holes when he arrived and soon expanded with 18 more by Arnold Palmer and another nine on a lighted par three course. "Watching them set the lights with a helicopter was a pretty neat experience," he says. But not everything the lights brought was helpful. Lammrsh laughs when he recalls the clouds of fly-ins and mole crickets he had to deal with.

It was through that period that Lammrsh made the transition from grass grower to course manager, learning to delegate even if that meant giving up some of the tasks he used to revel in. Never reluctant to get his hands dirty he was forced to accept the fact that he only had two of them. "Yeah, at one time in my

career that was one of my negatives," he says. "But when you have 54 holes you have got to let go of some things and manage more."

When he came to LPGA International in 1999, the facility still hosted an annual LPGA Tour event and Lammrsh soon found himself "balls to the wall." Our prep time was about four months and the last three months we overseeded the golf course," he says. "We worked our butts off. It was an exciting time, you know, to be able to go home and my wife had taped the TV coverage so I could watch it. When it was over it was a letdown. I can only imagine what a U.S. Open must be like."

The tour event went away but it wasn't Lammrsh's only taste of the television spotlight. In 2007 LPGA International hosted the NCAA Division One women's championship, although, he laughs, "Most people couldn't even find the Golf Channel at that time."

Like any superintendent who's been on the job over the past two decades, Lammrsh has had his "ups and downs." External threats like hurricanes and the Great Recession have caused headaches to go along with the internal challenges of trying to grow first-class turfgrass on an old cypress swamp. Then there's the fact that very few facilities retain the level of resources they enjoyed a decade ago.

"And when we get wet, we stay wet," Lammrsh says, recalling that when Hurricane Charlie took down about 70 oak trees planted 10 years before, "They almost looked like they were just taken out of the containers." The roots never had to go searching for water.

But being wet means no nematode problems and another plus is the quality of the effluent water the property accepts from the local municipality. "It's as good as any effluent you will see," Lammrsh says. One employee of the lab where he has the water

tested twice yearly tells him, “John, you could grow broccoli with this water!”

As if he has the time.

LPGA International sees about 80,000 rounds a year between the two courses; the Jones Course which is “a monster” at 250 acres including a teaching academy, and the Hills course at 110 acres. Lammrsh oversees a staff of 28 with two or three part-timers. He’s finding that retirees help offset a current shortage of quality younger labor lost to the construction industry.

His tournament diet remains strong but has a very different flavor from televised events. In addition to the final leg of Q-school, Lammrsh hosts a lot of small college tournaments, as well as the Northeast Conference Championship and the National Junior College Championship. He also hosts a “huge” Boys and Girls Club tournament that raises more than \$100,000 a year.

“We also have a lot of what I call your beer drinking scrambles,” he says. “They are fun for the folks but the college tournaments are fun for us. It really motivates my staff. They take a lot of pride in putting out a good product for those tournaments.”

Integral to Lammrsh’s success at LPGA International are his two long-term assistants whose roles are closer to those of a superintendent’s. Ron Kugler has been at the facility since it was built in 1994 and Carter Wrightsman also arrived before Lammrsh. “Obviously they do a lot more than the average assistant because I am gone a lot more these days,” he says referring to his regional role. “I try to visit each course three to four times a year. We’ve got a great group of guys at the other courses.”

Lammrsh says the day-to-day responsibilities at LPGA International are “still fun.” “It’s a great golf course, a great membership and the community has kept me here,” he says. But now 50, he sees teaching or mentoring playing a bigger role in his future. “I would like to advance with ClubCorp. Right now I am a regional superintendent but I would like to become a regional director. I’ve gained a lot of knowledge that I think can help me become more of a teacher than a doer.”

You don’t need to be Einstein to see the sense in that. ■



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John Piersol retires in December after 43 years at Florida Gateway College.

Piersol Readies for Retirement AS INDUSTRY MAKES TRANSITION

Transition is a word that makes golf course superintendents nervous in parts of the country where the climate demands an alternating focus between cool and warm season grasses. Most superintendents in Florida sit way below the southern tip of that zone but John Piersol believes they are in for a tough transition of a different kind.

As he prepares to close the door on a 43-year career as an educator at Florida Gateway College in Lake City this December, Piersol fears many superintendents are lagging behind a significant shift in the industry. Where, for decades, the college and others like it produced high quality assistant superintendent candidates Piersol believes that onus now falls more squarely on superintendents.

“I don’t think a lot of superintendents have made the transition to realize they have to find good people and train and educate them from within,” he says. “That’s a new concept to them. They’re used to reaching out to colleges and universities and getting a finished product. Those opportunities are not so plentiful anymore.”

Piersol says changing dynamics, first within the broader economy and then within the golf industry, transformed the marketplace. For decades, he says, young people got a taste for the profession

working on a golf course and would then move to Lake City for the three-year program.

The college’s program became one of the best-regarded in the country and had a waiting list for enrollment for many, many years. Several aspects of the program stood it apart, Piersol says. One was that students were expected to have had at least a year of practical experience on the golf course before they came to the college. Then their first year was spent studying mechanics operations.

“That on-course experience weeded out a lot of people who weren’t suited,” Piersol says. “By the time they came to us they knew what they wanted to do. I never had to talk anyone into the program and I could never talk anyone out of it. The year of mechanics made superintendents better at hiring their own technicians because they knew what to look for and made them better supervisors too.”

Each year students would serve 12-week internships at a golf course receiving two “check in” visits from faculty members. That helped students stay on track and importantly, Piersol says, helped educators stay abreast of what was happening within the industry

because they were interacting directly with superintendents and their operations.

“When the golf program was running hot it was as fun as heck,” he says. “We had high quality students, students who could have gone on to bachelor’s degrees, master’s, even Ph.D.s some of them. I have a lot of great memories. And I have always appreciated the fact that even after they were gone so many remained very supportive of the program. Not just with words, but with their money, time to come and speak to students, providing internships. I’m so thankful to the industry.”

Then the recession hit in 2008 and the entire ball game changed.

“Now it’s so much harder for a young person to leave a paying job and take on the expense of moving and studying for that amount of time,” Piersol says. “Times change, the golf industry changes, students’ attitudes change. That’s why we’ve reinvented our program to meet the needs of today. Now when superintendents find an employee with a good attitude and a good work ethic they don’t have to lose them. They can get their botany, chemistry, agronomy and so on online.”

Piersol outlines the nature of the new program in his own words in the accompanying story. He also describes how superintendents can begin to make the transition to getting the most out of the new program. Ellen Cochrane will become the new point person for golf and horticulture programs starting August 15. She has a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in horticulture from the University of Florida, industry experience and online teaching experience.

In the meantime, Piersol is still trying to work out what his retirement will look like. He’s never been a regular golfer. “I’m pretty bad at it,” he laughs. “But I do love being on the golf course from a horticultural perspective. Honestly, I’d rather jog the course than play it.” At 68, he doesn’t see himself “sitting around the house waiting to mow grass.” With grandchildren in Kentucky, he expects there will be more opportunities to visit them.

What he is certain of is that he is “grateful.” “I’m going to quote Bob Hope and say ‘Thanks for the memories,’” he says. “You can take the program away. You can do anything you want to. But I will always have the memories.”

Training, Educating and PROMOTING YOUR STAFF

By, John Piersol

From calls I have received, it appears that some golf course superintendents are having a hard time finding summer interns and good assistant superintendents. I believe this is a direct result of decreased student enrollment in turf programs around the country.

Recently, I received a call from a superintendent in South Florida who stated his inability to get applications for an open assistant’s position. He had called a friend in New York who said that he was having the same problem. I explained what I thought to be the cause and offered a new approach he might try in building his management team.

I am in a good position to understand the student enrollment in turf programs issue. Our highly-regarded on campus Associate in Science (AS) degree golf course operations program started having lower enrollment issues a few years ago. In the past, we had a waiting list to enroll. This resulted in the Florida Gateway College administration deciding to change our turf related education to an online certificate program.

It became apparent that those employees working on golf courses who liked what they were doing, but who needed some plant science background, could not afford to quit their job and come to campus like so many students did in the past. We realized that these students still needed education beyond the training they were getting on the golf course and that we needed to provide the education at their location rather than expecting them to attend the Lake City campus. We did this through the ever-improving online course approach.

The 18-credit online certificate program is not meant to be a replacement for what we had on campus. But it is an effort to get a good package of plant science courses to employees while they are still working. The superintendent can train an employee how



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to do various tasks but he or she does not have enough time to teach an employee an entire course in botany or soils. The employee needs solid work experience first with the superintendent providing on-site training. When ready, the employee can then enroll at Florida Gateway College and register for the courses in the certificate.

The six three-credit courses in the certificate are principles of plant growth (botany), agricultural chemistry, soils and fertilizers, turfgrass for golf and landscape, irrigation for golf and landscape, and landscape plants. I have plans to add four more courses leading to an advanced certificate which would articulate into a new AS degree that would include about five business courses. Until the new options are developed, I recommend to employees who call the college: get good work experience first, complete the FGC certificate and pursue a Bachelor's degree in Business. This will work.

I need golf course superintendents to encourage more employees to inquire about our online certificate. Increasing enrollments and graduates in this first certificate will enable me to develop the other online offerings including an AS degree. Our current college president, Dr. Lawrence Barrett, is very supportive of our online program and plans marketing assistance which will also help increase enrollments.

Go to www.fgc.edu click on academics then horticulture to see the certificate page. Please contact me with any questions at

(386) 754-4225 or john.piersol@fgc.edu.

Rather than relying on colleges to provide turf graduates to hire, more superintendents may have to educate existing employees who show interest in improving themselves. It is hard for employers to find employees who have a strong work ethic and good attitude, so keep those crew members who have proven themselves to be trustworthy employees. The 18-credit online certificate from Florida Gateway College may help, and we have scholarships, so money should not be an issue. ■

Alumni Roll: A Sampling

This is just a sampling – provided by John Piersol – of some of the graduates of the golf course operations program at what was Lake City Community College and now Florida Gateway College:

- Rickey Craig – Rosen Shingle Creek
- Mike Stevens – Billy Casper Golf
- Bill Davidson, CGCS – Country Club of Naples
- Ron Hill (deceased) – Amelia Island Resort
- Bobby Weed – Bobby Weed Golf Design
- Steve LaFrance – Honours Golf – World Golf Village
- Andy Maguire, CGCS – Marsh Creek Country Club
- Rip Phillips – Fernandina Beach Golf Club
- Clayton Estes, CGCS – San Jose Country Club
- John Lammish – LPGA International
- Greg Tharp – Jacksonville Golf and Country Club
- Bobby Ellis – Golf Agronomics Supply and Handling
- Dwight Kummer – Howard Fertilizer and Chemical
- Glen Thompson – Golf Ventures (Golf Ventures was started by a Lake City Community College graduate, David Miller)
- Kevin Downing, CGCS – 3 Putt Services
- Tim Cann – Harbour Ridge Yacht and Country Club
- Ken Mangum, CGCS – Atlanta Athletic Club, retired
- Mike Crawford, CGCS – PGA Tour agronomist
- John Gallagher – The Polo Club of Boca Raton
- Jimmy Ellison – Retired
- Melanie Mark – International Golf Maintenance
- Glenn Zakany – G to Z Turf Services
- Rory Mudge – Grey Oaks Country Club
- Kyle Sweet, CGCS – The Sanctuary Golf Club
- Craig Weyandt – The Moorings Club
- Scott Zakany – Cypress Golf Services
- Kevin Churchill – Kelly Plantation
- Harold Jenkins – Jenkins Landscape Company
- John Johnson – Native Outdoor Services
- David Robinson, CGCS – Marriott International
- Mark Clay – Everbank Field – Jacksonville Jaguars
- Tim Hiers, CGCS – Mediterra Club
- Matt Taylor, CGCS – Royal Poinciana Golf Club



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IN THE NEWS



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

Jeff Price

The Colony Golf and Bay Club, Bonita Springs

Naples Daily News, May 17

WCI Communities has enlisted Jerry Pate Design of Pensacola for a comprehensive six-month greens renovation that will improve all-around playability on the community's par-72 championship golf course that was originally designed by Pate in 2000. The renovation will introduce Platinum Paspalum grass, an environmentally sustainable turfgrass with superior appearance and playability, on 18 rebuilt greens and three putting and chipping greens. Project plans also include re-grassing surrounds and restoring bunkers to their original size and scope.

Jeff Price, The Colony Golf Club's new golf course superintendent, has more than a decade of experience in Paspalum grass management. The course will remain closed through the summer months during the renovations and is scheduled to reopen November 1.

Robert Bittner, CGCS

The Club at Pelican Bay

Naples Daily News, May 1

The Club at Pelican Bay has achieved the designation as a certified Audubon cooperative sanctuary through the Audubon cooperative sanctuary program for golf courses. Robert Bittner, CGCS led the effort to obtain sanctuary designation on the property and is being recognized for environmental stewardship by Audubon International. The Club at Pelican Bay is one of 111 golf courses in Florida and 905 in the world to hold the title of Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

Bob Bittner, director of golf course operations, stated, "The membership understands the importance of protecting the wildlife and the environment. Our members support environmental stewardship which will only serve to enhance our unique lifestyle and beautiful community." Golf course architect Arthur Hills designed The Club at Pelican Bay's challenging 27-hole course, which originally opened in 1980 and was later renovated in 1999-2000.

Bob Gruber

Plantation Bay Golf and Country Club

Florida Times Union, May 17

Plantation Bay Golf and Country Club has named Bob Gruber as head golf course superintendent. "We are thrilled to welcome Bob back to Plantation Bay," said Gregory Brousse, managing director of golf operations for ICI Homes. "Bob has been in the golf course business for more than 25 years and his diverse industry expertise will contribute significantly to the revitalization initiative underway at Plantation Bay. These enhancements are designed to increase membership value and make the club's member experience more enjoyable. Once everything is complete, Plantation Bay, which offers 45 holes of golf and allows private carts, will unquestionably be one of the best golf course communities in Florida."

In his new role, Gruber will manage the course operations, maintenance and staff for the Prestwick, Club de Bonmont and Westlake golf courses at Plantation Bay. His experience includes working mostly with private courses in Florida including the Prestwick golf course at Plantation Bay and the golf course at Amelia National Golf and Country Club in Nassau County. Gruber will oversee the golf course renovation and enhancement project currently underway. Plantation Bay will temporarily close Club de Bonmont, an 18-hole, par-72 course, in mid-May for a significant tee-to-green renovation. The course is expected to re-open in September. A similar renovation is planned for the 18-hole, par 71 Prestwick golf course in summer 2017. Once the work on Club de Bonmont and Prestwick is complete, Plantation Bay will evaluate the nine-hole Westlake course for future enhancements.

Glyn Williamson

Quarry Golf Club

Marco Island Sun Times, June 27

Bob Radunz's first six months as both general manager and COO of the Quarry Golf Club in North Naples have been eventful and successful. He has supervised three major new hires, the plans and execution of course improvements, enhanced communications with members, streamlined operations, including accounting and product merchandising, among other activities with more developments to come.

Along with hiring a new controller, he appointed Rodney Whisman and Glyn Williamson as new course superintendent and food and beverage director, respectively. "They're both veterans in our area and top notch, best in class in what they do and provide," and expressed particular satisfaction with the work going on in "improving the health of the greens with better agronomic practices."

Jay Mullen

Plantation Golf and Country Club

Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 8

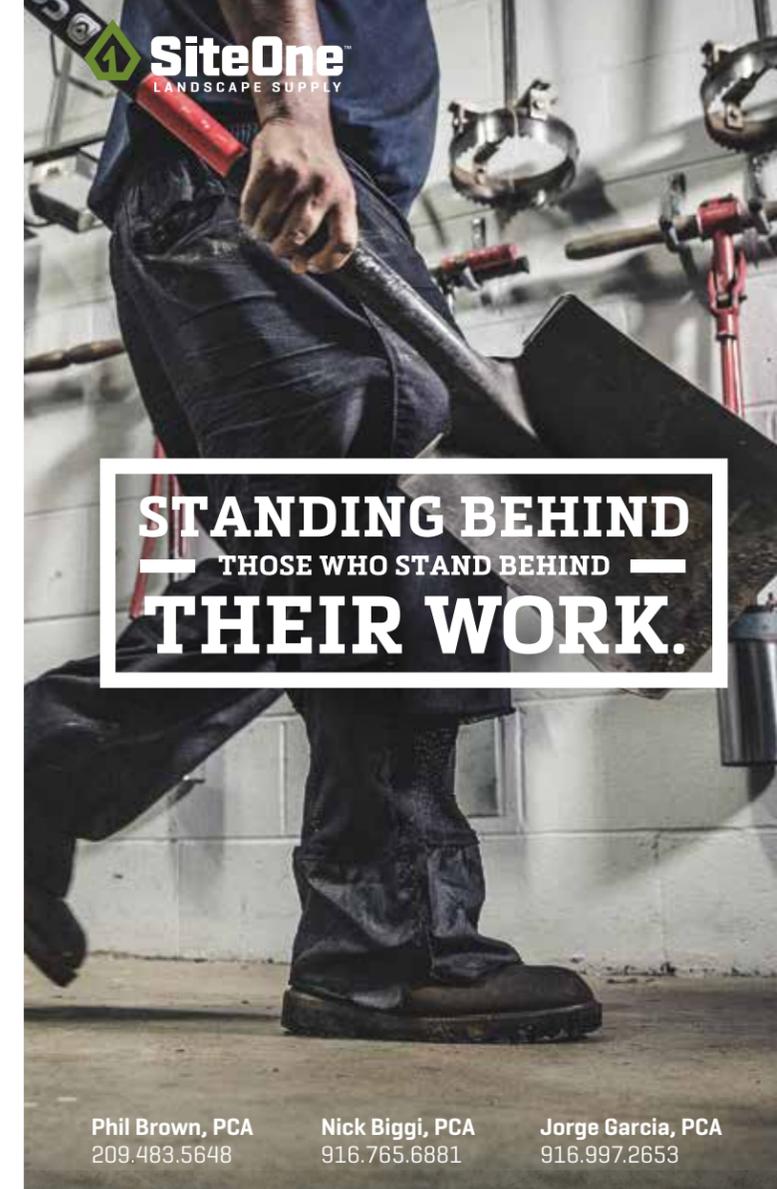
Jay Mullen is the new director of grounds maintenance at Plantation Golf and Country Club, in Venice. His golf maintenance career started in 2003 at a nationally ranked, multi-course country club, where he climbed the ranks, eventually being promoted to head superintendent. Before joining Plantation, he spent four years running 36 holes at Palm Aire Country Club. Mullen earned his turf management degree with a combination of credits from the University of Missouri and Pennsylvania State University.

Andrew Ulsh

Former assistant superintendent

PGA.com, July 5

This summer, PGA.com put together a list of "nine things that drive us crazy on the golf course." The post generated considerable feedback. Among some of the responses highlighted in a subsequent update was the following from a former assistant superintendent in Florida: "I was an assistant superintendent at a Florida golf course... I have left the industry because of the lack of respect from the golfers towards the golf course. There is a lot of hard work in some very adverse working conditions for you jokers to go out there and treat the course like your personal playground... grow up and learn some respect," Andrew Ulsh.



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Past-Presidents Gather at Poa



Some of the Florida GCSA's past-presidents mingled with current association leaders and representatives of the Everglades GCSA on the eve of this year's Poa Classic on Marco Island. Past-presidents from left Greg Pheneger from John's Island Club, Scott Bell from Redstick Golf Club, Nancy Miller from Maples Leaf Country Club and Paul Crawford of Ameriturf are pictured with current president David Dore-Smith from Copperleaf Golf Club at Marco Island Beach Resort, Golf and Spa.

Florida Gateway Program Online

Need management people? Educate and promote good employees who like what they are doing but who have no plant science background. Use the all online certificate in horticulture from Florida Gateway College. This 18 credit certificate consists of six three-credit courses.

Employees can take two courses per semester and finish the certificate in one year while working full-time. Plus, qualified students can earn a tuition scholarship if they receive a minimum "C" grade, so the certificate could be almost free except for books.

Contact Florida Gateway at john.piersol@fgc.edu, 386-754-4225 or go to www.fgc.edu and click on academics, then horticulture. Students must be accepted by early August in order to register for fall classes.

- John Piersol



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Mike Shields
Delray Beach County Club



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Florida Courses Rule BioBlitz



Here's looking at you: The Florida softshell turtle that won over judges in the BioBlitz photography contest.

Florida golf courses dominated the second annual BioBlitz, a species-counting competition that ran from Earth Day on April 22 through International Migratory Bird Day on May 14. The competition run by Audubon International helps highlight the diversity of species that call golf courses home. It also generates local interest and attention on the green space and recreational opportunities deliver to their communities.

Venice Golf and Country Club in Venice where Carlos Arraya is golf course superintendent won the competition to identify the most species on property. Local community and wildlife experts counted 910 different species over the course of the competition. Venice also won last year's BioBlitz when 588 species were counted over a much shorter duration.

Florida courses also finished second in the species count, second and third in the competition to engage the most people in the event and won a photo competition. The photo was of a Florida softshell turtle taken at Shadow Wood Country Club in Bonita Springs where Eric Ruha is superintendent.

Thirty-three golf courses across the world participated this year and found a total of 3118 unique species and with 1,274 people taking part. Total species, which included animals, plants, fungi, and insects, increased by 40 percent from the 2015 count. The number of participants increased by almost 80 percent.

Most Species

- 1st 910 species: Venice Golf and Country Club, Venice FL.
Superintendent Carlos Arraya.
- 2nd 526 species: Naples Lakes Country Club, Naples, FL.
Superintendent Michael Wallace
- 3rd 430 species: Jekyll Island Club, GA.
Superintendent Aaron Saunders.

Most Participants

- 1st 161 people: Jekyll Island Club, GA.
Superintendent Aaron Saunders.
- 2nd 121 people: Park Ridge Golf Course, Lake Worth, FL.
Superintendent Gary Martin.
- 3rd 110 People: Southwinds Golf Course, Boca Raton, FL.
Superintendent Peter Aravantis.

Best Photo Contest

- 1st Florida softshell turtle: Shadow Wood Country Club, FL.
Superintendent Eric Ruha.

James Joins Engage Agro

Edward James of Leesburg, FL has accepted the role of southeast regional manager for Engage Agro USA. Engage Agro manager Steve Stansell says James brings more than three decades of agricultural experience to the position. James will be responsible for the agricultural, turf and ornamental markets in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas.

"Edward's field experience, personal connections and academic background add to his qualifications and will clearly benefit the region," Stansell says. "He has hands-on experience with soil nutrition and plant fertilization requirements and in addition, an academic focus covering soil and plant science."

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Golf Ventures Names New Sales Managers

Golf Ventures has named two new territory sales managers in Florida. Bradley Williams has joined the company as central Florida sales manager and Justin Baker will cover territory including Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward and parts of Palm Beach counties.

Golf Ventures sales manager Glen Thompson says Williams has an impressive military and sales record. "While Bradley's work experience has been in military and government operations, he has been successful. He's always been a golfer and his twin brother is a course superintendent, so he knows a lot about the industry. He's disciplined and can learn the products."

Williams is an ardent University of Florida Gator fan and a member of the Gator Boosters Board of Directors. He has a 12-year-old son.

Baker has spent his career in the golf industry and feels his new role with Golf Ventures is "the right fit that came along at the right time." After completing his certification in golf and turf management at Rutgers University, Baker progressed through golf course superintendent ranks at several southeast Florida golf clubs then spent two years in product sales.

Golf Ventures' Thompson says, "Justin has worked in the area for 12 years, so he knows the agronomic challenges and needs in southeast Florida and has established relationships with others in the business."

Baker is married with two young children. In addition to playing golf, he enjoys participating in competitive barbecue and watching college football.

Timuquana Secures Women's Four-Ball

Timuquana Country Club in Jacksonville where Alan Brown is golf course superintendent will host the 2019 U.S. Women's Amateur Four-Ball Championship. Designed in 1923 by Donald Ross against the backdrop of the St. Johns River, the course was renovated in the mid-1950s by Robert Trent Jones Jr. with subsequent alterations by George Cobb and Dave Gordon. In 1996, Bobby Weed led another major renovation that improved drainage and irrigation. Among other changes, more than 800 trees were removed, helping to restore the course to its original design.

Timuquana hosted the 2002 U.S. Senior Amateur and the club has also hosted several USGA qualifiers, including five U.S. Amateur sectional qualifiers. It hosted its first U.S. Open sectional qualifier in June.

Other upcoming USGA championships in the Sunshine State include the 2016 U.S. Women's Amateur Four-Ball at Streamsong Resort; the 2017 U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur at Quail Creek Country Club in Naples; the 2018 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball at Jupiter Hills Club in Tequesta; and the 2018 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur at Orchid Island Golf and Beach Club in Vero Beach.



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**Past Leaders Present
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Brothers in arms: Kevin Sunderman, Darren Davis, CGCS and Greg Pheneger at National Golf Day in Washington, DC.

Three Florida GCSA past-presidents were among one of the strongest golf industry delegations yet for National Golf Day in Washington, DC in May. Darren Davis, CGCS from Olde Florida Golf Club, Greg Pheneger from John's Island Club and Kevin Sunderman from Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club helped deliver the message that the game generates nearly two million jobs and \$70 billion in economic impact. The group also stressed the game's environmental value to local communities, fitness benefits and its charitable contributions.

In more than 100 meetings on Capitol Hill, the golf delegation focused on three core areas: the Personal Health Investment Today Act, current labor laws and regulations, and environmental regulations impacting golf.

Florida congressman Ander Crenshaw was quoted in a subsequent press release from the We Are Golf coalition. "Capitol Hill's annual Golf Day spells out that golf is much more than a game," Crenshaw said. "Along with the sportsmanship and opportunity to forge new and lasting relationships, and mentor youth through such organizations as The First Tee, come billions of dollars worth of economic growth, job creation, and charitable giving. That's something we all can get behind, today and for decades to come."

Organizations participating were the Club Managers Association of America, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Ladies Professional Golf Association, National Golf Course Owners Association, PGA of America, PGA Tour, United States Golf Association, United States Golf Manufacturers Council, World Golf Foundation and others. PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem, playing stars Davis Love III, Steve Stricker and Nancy Lopez, also attended.

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Zach Lane Now

On Bayer Staff

Zach Lane has joined Bayer's Environmental Science division as area sales manager in southwest Florida. In his new role, Lane will manage customer and distributor relationships for both golf and lawn and landscape markets across the territory.

"Lane brings a strong foundation of industry experience, having served as a golf course superintendent in the southwest Florida area for the past 12 years," Bayer's regional sales manager Mike Ruizzo says.

Lane most recently served as director of agronomy at Laurel Oak Country Club in Sarasota where he successfully managed the multi-course private country club and oversaw the restoration of its East Course. Lane has extensive experience in course preparation for PGA Tour events. He is the current president of the Suncoast GCSA and holds a bachelor of science in agriculture, agronomy and soil sciences from Tennessee Technological University.

Daigle's Daughter

Wins Scholarship

Brittany Daigle, daughter of Edward Daigle, golf course superintendent at Osceola Municipal Golf Course in Pensacola, is one of the 20 recipients of a 2016 Legacy Award scholarship GCSAA. Legacy Award recipients each receive \$1,500. Daigle is majoring in aerospace engineering at the University of Florida.

Funded through its philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf and Syngenta, the GCSAA Legacy Awards provide scholarships to the children and grandchildren of GCSAA members who have been active for five or more consecutive years. "Syngenta is committed to the golf industry and excited about the future opportunities for these young leaders," Syngenta turf market manager Stephanie Schwenke says. "The Legacy Awards signify achievement by these individuals. It's our pleasure to support golf course superintendents, the backbone of the industry."

Czerkies Renews

Certification

Kevin Czerkies, certified golf course superintendent at Manatee Cove Golf Course at Patrick Air Force Base has completed the renewal process for maintaining his elite status with GCSAA. Czerkies has been at Manatee Cove since 2008. A 30-year GC-SAA member, he initially achieved his certification in 1991. Only about 1,500 golf course superintendents worldwide currently hold top-level status as a certified golf course superintendent.

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Bear's Paw Earns

Renovation Award



The work of former Florida GCSA director Mark Atwood played a part in a major award for Bear's Paw Country Club in Naples. Golf Inc. Magazine ranked the club the No. 1 renovated private golf course in the state, as well as the third overall among global renovations.

Evaluated by undercover judges, the award not only considered the aesthetic transformations of the golf course, but the improvements that made them more sustainable and decreased maintenance costs. The \$4.8 million renovation of the Jack Nicklaus signature course was completed in 2015.

Atwood has been at Bear's Paw since 1985. He attended the University of Florida and Lake City Community College with a degree in golf course operations.

Frank Takes on

Harrell's Role



Jason Frank

Jason Frank is now turf sales manager in Florida for Harrell's. Frank brings 16 years combined experience in research, direct management, operations, sales and leadership positions. He worked for Bayer Crop Science in Florida for the past six years. With Bayer he served as area sales manager and most recently key account manager.

He has a bachelor's degree in turfgrass with a minor in business administration and three master's degrees – soil and water science, MBA and horticulture sciences. He also maintains licensure in Florida as a Florida commercial applicator and is certified as a professional agronomist, crop advisor and horticulture professional.

Name Change

For Company

PrimeraTurf is now Primera. The 16-year old business cooperative has changed its name to reflect market expansion. "The new name – Primera – allows us to emphasize our wide-ranging market growth and expansion beyond servicing just the turf industry," says Primera chief executive officer John Gertz. "We are excited about this change and look forward to the continued partnerships within the industry that enabled us to make this move."

New Hires at

Sod Solutions

Sod Solutions, a turfgrass research and development company, has hired Donna Waldrep as executive director of marketing and Jacob Long as software sales manager for Turf Logistics.

Waldrep has more than 20 years of marketing experience and will lead strategic planning and implementation of more than a dozen marketing programs for Sod Solutions and its subsidiaries, AmpAgronomy and Turf Logistics. She has a degree in marketing from the University of South Carolina. Long will focus on new business development for Turf Logistics software as well as client service and retention. He holds a degree in political science from the University of South Carolina Upstate.

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Broken Sound Strikes a Chord With First Green Field Trip

Recently I had the opportunity to participate with the team at Broken Sound Country Club in Boca Raton in a dry run preparation for an upcoming First Green field trip. The club engaged students participating in a summer camp to evaluate the process and offerings that we will provide for students from local schools in the fall.

Eighteen-year GCSAA member, Shannon Easter, director of golf course maintenance at Broken Sound has an inspired vision for how he would like to see the field trips conducted. Many of the ongoing practices at the club lend themselves to the experience for the students who will be participating. From the Audubon program, to honey bees and butterfly gardens, as well as the extensive recycling program in use throughout the club and community there is a multitude of positive environmental relationships to showcase for students this fall.

On this particular day, we were planning to host 55 campers as they participated in four stations demonstrating the environmental programs showcased at Broken Sound. Transporting a group this large proved to be the first challenge. The people-mover carts took a little time to get the group from the clubhouse to the location on the golf course where the stations were set up. Once we had the students transported, we planned to conduct four 15 minute sessions with the children.

I followed one group as they rotated through the sessions. We started with the always-engaging Brian Beckner from Native Bird Boxes who demonstrated the benefits of golf courses and how they serve as home to a variety of bird types. Broken Sound has nearly 120 bird houses and provides a great sanctuary for a wide range of birds in the urban environment that exists in Boca Raton. Brian showcased a number of bird houses and explained how the type and location of the houses were attractive to certain bird species.

Our second stop was with Sierra Malnove of Sierra's Bees as she conducted a very interesting overview of the bees that call Broken Sound home. There are 17 hives located on the grounds at the club and Sierra works with the team to ensure their well-being. Sierra was able to communicate the role that bees play in pollination and demonstrate how she handles bees without alarming them and getting stung.

The entire process was fascinating. I am not sure who was more interested me or the students. From their hives, the club is able to produce more than 1000 pounds of honey each year. The club hopes to double this production by increasing the number of hives on property. I was able sample some of the honey and it was very tasty indeed.

As we were moving through to our third station, Mother Nature threw us a curveball with rain and lightning. We quickly ushered the students into the maintenance facility and set up the educational stations inside. We regrouped while Shannon discussed the



Shannon Easter speaks to summer camp students about his role at Broken Sound Country Club.



Brian Beckner of Native Bird Boxes explains how golf courses can provide wildlife habitat.

recycling program and how effective it has been for Broken Sound. The club is able to recycle close to 95 percent of its waste, using it on the golf course as mulch or potting soil. The entire process from food waste or organic waste takes about five days to pass through the recycler and then it can be used on the golf course.

After the recycler, my group finished the day with a very informative discussion about the butterfly gardens on property. Lois Hendricks, a club member and butterfly enthusiast, engaged the children with her presentation. Lois was very enlightening as she demonstrated how the butterflies also played an integral part in pollination. She also discussed the migratory patterns of Monarch butterflies and how it takes several generations for the butterflies to make their way back to their original location.

Overall, the students were exposed to a ton of positive environmental benefits that golf courses provide through their experience at Broken Sound Country Club. The program will be enhanced as future field trips are conducted at the facility. It is my genuine hope that other superintendents will take on the opportunity to grow the game of golf through awareness programs such as The First Green has to offer. ■

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



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