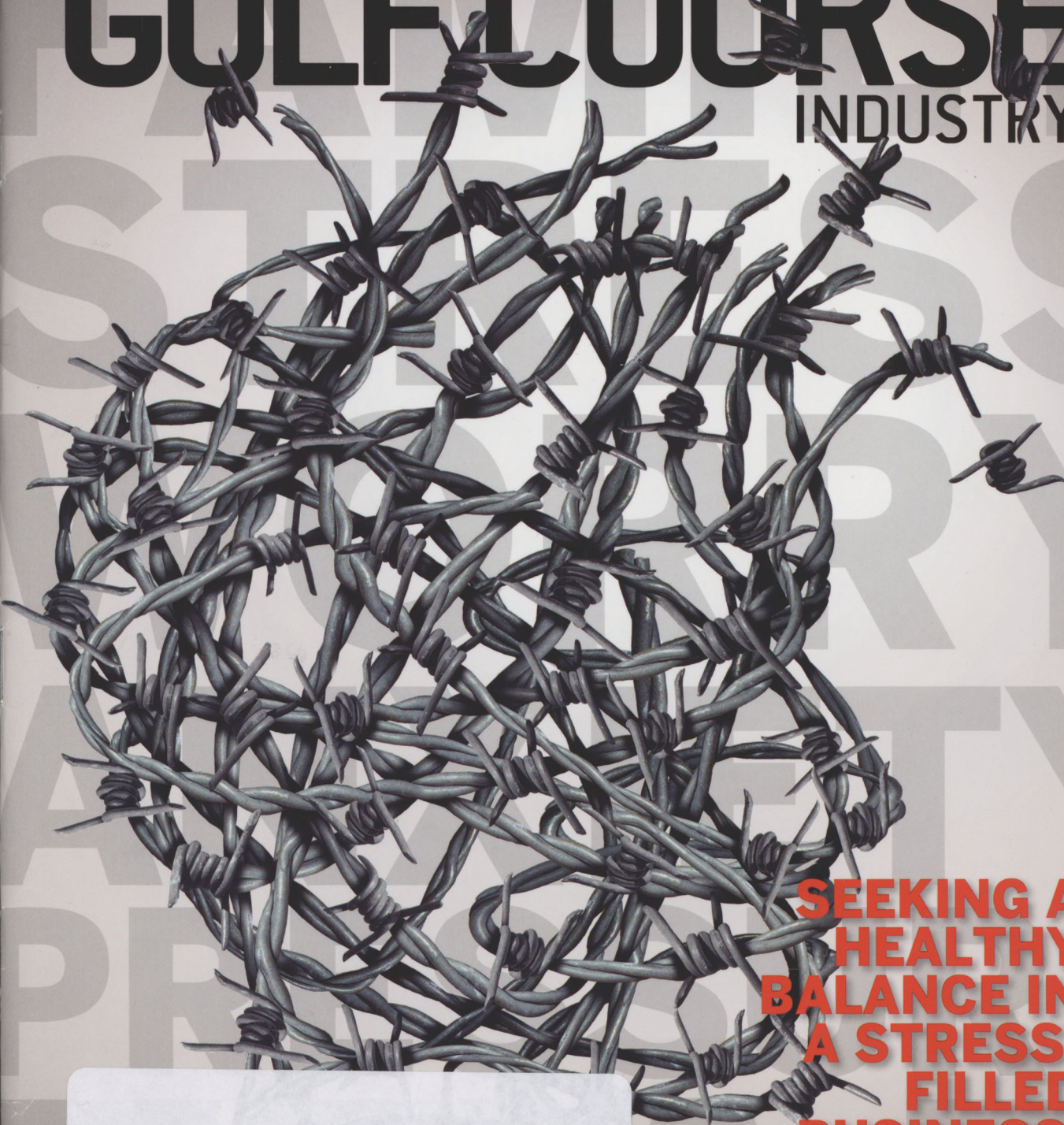


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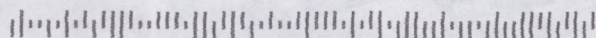
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BALANCE ON A BOOKSHELF

Our office doesn't provide sunrise and sunset views. Or swaths of vibrant turf. Or opportunities to indulge in crisp air while observing wildlife.

We do have a bookshelf near our cubicle cluster. Our leaders graciously stock it with self-help books. We don't have group discussions about the books. Nobody tracks who reads them.

We're free to take the books where we like and use them how we deem fit. Copies are abundant; lessons are relatable. For an editor/writer/tweeter/producer, the corner bookshelf represents ryegrass stripes or an edged bunker. It's glorious.

The corporate book fairy recently placed 10th anniversary copies of Gretchen Rubin's "The Happiness Project" on the shelf. The project documents Rubin's yearlong quest to quantifiably boost her happiness. Rubin clears clutter, learns to "fight right" with her husband and writes a novel in 30 days.

Released in 2009, the book reached No. 1 on the New York Times bestseller list and sold more than 2 million copies. The anniversary edition boasts multiple goodies, including a conversation with Rubin about the book's success and her life since its release. She fields a question about work-life balance in the conversation. Rubin is a mother, wife, writer, podcaster, tweeter and blogger, yet finds "plenty of time" for things that are important to her and "crams" her life with things she loves.

Rubin doesn't mention golf in the book, but her story relates to what many in the industry experienced in 2018. Motivated people who work on golf courses struggled balancing life and work responsibilities. The stories in this issue, the third edition of "Turfheads Take Over," reflect this struggle.

Six submissions, including Parker Ferren's wonderful tribute to Steve Wright, a popular Florida superintendent who suddenly died in

November, are highly personal stories about achieving balance. Superintendents tell us they learn best from each other, and we're confident you'll be pleased with the heaping doses of self-help on these pages.

Stories produced by your peers also should eliminate isolation created by a challenging year. West Virginia superintendent Jason Hollen writes Twitter helped him "take a

step back" from his daily world. "As I did, I started to see others going through similar triumphs and struggles," he adds. "I did not feel so alone." The segment of the industry not on Twitter will feel that sense of camaraderie by reading Hollen's contribution (page 14).

The learning shouldn't be confined to an industry publication. The brilliant

Henry DeLozier suggests 10 ways to become a more effective leader in his column (page 8). No. 7 on the list: Read and read some more. Opening non-turf books introduces you to motivated people in other fields encountering similar challenges balancing their personal and professional lives. People such as Rubin.

An author living in New York City might not appear to have much in common with a superintendent in Kentucky trying to keep bentgrass alive during a summer – and early fall – filled with 90-degree days. But creativity clogs creep into writers' personal lives, making them less effective at home and work. Deadlines make writers delirious, sometimes forcing them to miss family events. Intense competition for book deals and lucrative freelance assignments can yield financial stress.

Rubin made boosting happiness part of her routine. She went to the extreme of writing a book about her quest, ending the project as a happier person with the balance required to juggle numerous demands.

She found time for what's important to her and shared her story with others. She's the literary version of the people whose thoughts you are reading in this issue. **GCI**



Guy Cipriano
Senior Editor

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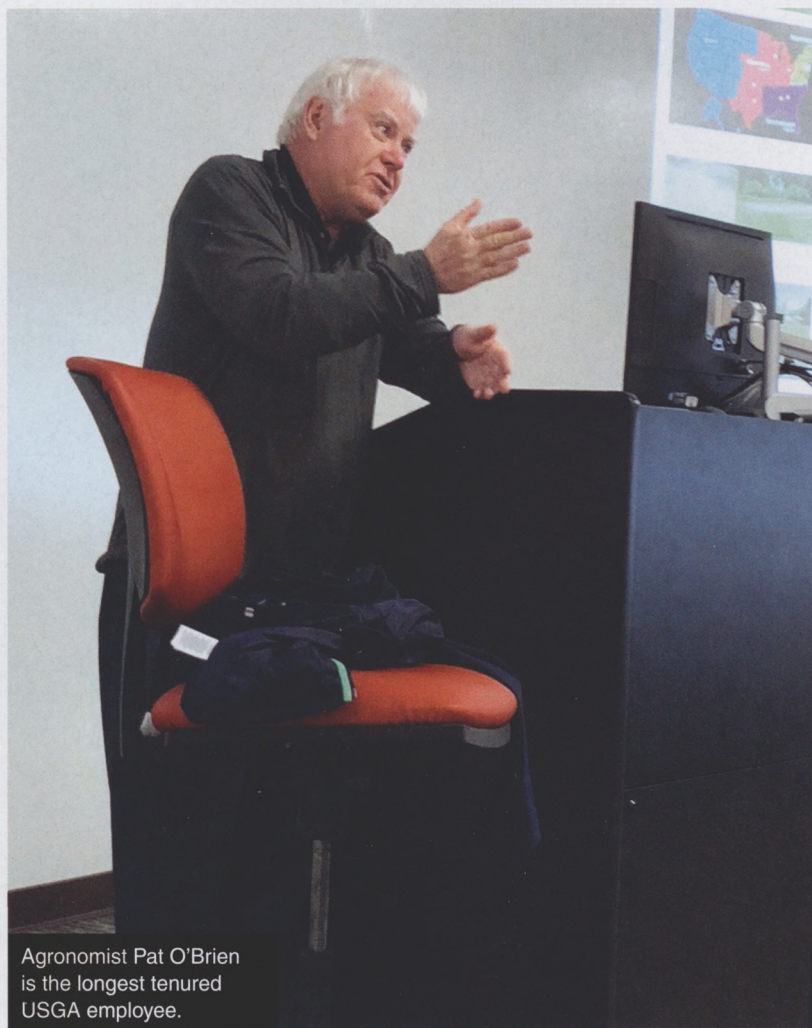
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Agronomist Pat O'Brien is the longest tenured USGA employee.

LUCKY TO HAVE HIM AROUND

GCI's Guy Cipriano visits a turf class and discovers why the USGA's Pat O'Brien is a Southeast turf treasure.

Hats off. Phones away. Notebooks out. USGA Green Section agronomist Pat O'Brien is speaking.

On this morning, the Monday of Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show week, O'Brien stands before three dozen Horry-Georgetown Technical College turf students. He brings slides and stories – and more stories. O'Brien isn't your typical agronomist. He's the longest tenured USGA employee.

Ponder that for a moment. The most venerable full-time employee representing an organization formed in 1894 serves superintendents in the Southeast. The region's superintendents are lucky.

O'Brien is omnipresent in the Carolinas and Georgia, visiting more than 100 golf courses each year. He's more omnipresent than usual Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show week. After the two-hour discussions with students, O'Brien and longtime friend Dick Schulz, a Georgia-based agronomist, golf course owner and industry entrepreneur, hustle to Prestwick Country Club to participate in the Carolinas GCSA Golf Championships. Prestwick superintendent Paul Kaufman's back-track vertical mowing tactics, coincidentally, are mentioned in O'Brien's presentation.

Prestwick boasts smooth, healthy, slick ultradwarf bermudagrass greens. Ultradwarf bermudagrass greens are subjects of a Tuesday morning seminar O'Brien leads with USGA colleague Dr. Steve Kammerer and Virginia Tech's Dr. Mike Goatley. The seminar is about winter management of the surfaces. Prolonged low temperatures yielded significant damage to the surfaces in the region, hurting facilities already facing operational tightropes.

Longevity allows O'Brien a little more latitude for boldness than other seminar leaders. He says publicly what other agronomists might only utter privately. When discussing winter damage with the Horry-Georgetown students, he

lambasts owners who fail to provide superintendents with the resources to purchase and deploy turf covers. "What a crazy, damn business model some people have?" he says. "It's just stupidity." His voice changes tones. His hands forcefully move, further proving his point: cold happens even in the Southeast and it's best to be prepared for it.

The presentation includes other I-told-them-so moments. It also includes doses of humility, with O'Brien describing some of his mistakes to students. Examples of failure further humanize O'Brien – a grandfatherly figure to industry newbies – while soothing students early in their frustrating quests for agronomic perfection. Mistakes are made in the golf business and recovering from them strengthen turf managers.

O'Brien alludes to Schulz, whose course, The Oaks Course, in Covington, Ga., resides in golf's middle class, throughout the discussion. Horry-Georgetown's delightfully dedicated turf leadership tandem of Charles Granger and Ashley Wilkinson ask O'Brien about material they are discussing in class. O'Brien might be the man in front of the room, but he knows the best turf discussions are multi-sided.

Golf is a central part of his life. His job entails visiting courses, leading seminars, writing reports and making recommendations. His zest for the game brings him back to many of the places he visits, allowing him to see the game through the eyes of a member or daily-fee customer.

His biggest complaint as a golf consumer? "Letting the rough get too tall," he tells the students. To illustrate the conundrum, he shows a picture of a ball buried in thick bermudagrass rough. "Why aren't we using growth regulators on rough?" he says. "We can prevent this very easily." Growth regulators are one solution. Another solution, O'Brien says, is using a high-speed, high-productivity mowing system he calls the "Antonio Brown of rough mowers." Brown is speedy on and the off the field. The star wide receiver on O'Brien's beloved Pittsburgh Steelers was recently cited for driving more than 100 mph. Students who follow pro football chuckle at the comparison.

He led another turf talk during the Wednesday general educational session of the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show. Less impressionable turf managers filled the room. Few agreed with his every word. But they were all entertained and enlightened.

The Southeast can be an unforgiving agronomic region. O'Brien has endured numerous changes within the industry and his high-profile organization. He continues finding ways to reach every generation of turf manager.

No matter how many times you hear him speak, seeing O'Brien in Myrtle Beach represents one of the great joys of Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show week. **GCI**



Horry-Georgetown Technical College received a visit from Pat O'Brien last month.

Tartan Talks No. 29

Where in the world is Kevin Ramsey?



Ramsey

That's a wild, story-filled question.

Ramsey, a partner at Santa Rosa, California-based Golfplan, describes his globetrotting career in a Tartan Talks episode. A visit to the Southeast Asia nation of Laos last month increased the number of countries Ramsey has visited to 41. "I'm not sure what career path I could have chosen that would have allowed me to see so many things," he says.

In the podcast, Ramsey explains how Golfplan introduces golf in developing countries and addresses some of the labor and site challenges associated with working in places such as Uganda, Turkey and former Soviet Republic of Georgia. Golfplan has executed projects on six continents, producing memories and fulfillment for Ramsey.

"It's pretty neat to be able to bring golf to places for the first time," he says. "You're not just designing golf courses. You're kind of bringing them the golf culture and introducing people to that lifestyle."

Enter <https://goo.gl/QRyFv> into your web browser to hear the podcast.



EFFECTIVE BEGINNINGS



Henry DeLozier is a principal in the Global Golf Advisors consultancy. DeLozier joined Global Golf Advisors in 2008 after nine years as the vice president of golf for Pulte Homes. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Audubon International.

A good friend says he starts his list of New Year's resolutions with one word written across the top of a legal pad. The word is "effective," which is a good choice because it implies results. Results normally require action on our part – and usually not the same things, done the same ways. We need to do things differently and better before we can improve relationships, be more efficient and increase the value we bring to our businesses.

If you hope to be more effective in 2019, here are 10 suggestions.

1. TRACK YOUR TIME. Even the busiest and most efficient people waste parts of their day's most precious resource. The time-stealing culprits are numerous and easily mistaken: idle chit-chat, social media, meetings. Like a sensible diet, each has its place, but moderation is the key. Keep a log for a week to know where every minute was spent. Evaluate how much was spent effectively, in pursuit of goals and objectives. Then repeat the task the next week, keeping in mind the previous week's wasted time, and compare results. You might be astonished.

2. MEASURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, NOT EFFORT. It was the Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle who wrote, "We live in deeds, not years." It's worth knowing how long it took you or your staff to accomplish a task

or project, but it's the outcome that is the ultimate measure of our work. Did that 12-hour day you just put in move the needle on a strategic objective? If not, where could your time have been better spent?

3. STOP MULTI-TASKING. People like to brag about juggling multiple tasks and priorities. But time and efficiency experts agree that often these same people are deluding themselves, actually doing twice as much work half as effectively. Focus on one task, complete it and move to your next priority. Effective multi-tasking is called delegating.

4. GET STARTED. If 80 percent of success is showing up (Woody Allen is supposed to have said that), getting started must account for at least another 10 or 15 percent. Knowing where to begin starts with knowing where you want to finish. So, start with one of your goals and work back. Develop a routine that gets you going each day. Whatever works, do it consistently.

5. DRESS TO IMPRESS. Unfair though it may be, people begin forming opinions of others before their first word is spoken. They do it based on an untucked shirttail, an ill-fitting sport coat and the shine on a person's shoes. Don't let any of those things negatively influence an opinion.

6. WRITE SIMPLY, CLEARLY AND FACTUALLY. Most everyone is called on to report on programs and results. Maybe you're making a pitch for a budget increase in your area. All of those things start with putting your thoughts on paper. What and how one writes greatly influences how people respond. Organize your thoughts, express them in short sentences composed of carefully chosen words, without misspellings and typos, and then edit carefully. Before hitting "send" or sealing the envelope, read what you've written out loud to yourself or a colleague. If the logic seems jumbled or the words don't flow easily, take the time to fix it.

7. READ AND THEN READ SOME MORE. President Harry Truman noted, "Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers." For many of us, reading to keep up with trends and developments in our field is the last thing we seem to have time to do. If that's the case, schedule reading time just as you would time for any other task.

8. IMPROVE YOUR WORKSPACE. Your workspace is a reflection of your state of mind and organizational abilities. Are golf clubs, coffee cups and boxes scattered about? Or is it purposely organized to help you to focus on your most immediate responsibilities and tasks? Simplify your work-setting by eliminating the clutter and you'll find it easier to focus on priorities.

9. ESTABLISH YOUR OWN WIND-DOWN ROUTINE. Be deliberate in finishing your work, just as you were in starting it. Make your priority list for tomorrow as a part of winding down and then leave, knowing there will always be more work to be done and that there's always tomorrow.

10. DREAM BIG. How else are you going to be really effective? **GCI**

THE EASY CHOICE

WHEN POWER, PERFORMANCE,
VERSATILITY AND COMFORT MATTER.








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THE GRAINYS

— 2018 EDITION



Tim Moraghan, principal, ASPIRE Golf (tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com). Follow Tim's blog, Golf Course Confidential at www.aspire-golf.com/buzz.html or on Twitter @TimMoraghan



Welcome to the 2018 edition of The Grainys, my highly subjective awards for the best and worst of the golf year just past. To be honest, it was a rather dull year, but that didn't stop The Grainys crew from finding some memorable achievements.

Now on the tee, the envelopes, please....

OUTSTANDING RE-DIRECTION

Grainys – and kudos – to Pete Bevacqua, former CEO of the PGA of America, who in one of his last major acts moved the association's premier event – the PGA Championship – to a more agronomically and climatically favorable time of the year. By shifting the PGA from August to May, we should be done with the soft, receptive sites of Oklahoma, Kentucky, Missouri and New Jersey in August, and every other state not north of Manitoba. Good timing, too, with the first May PGA next year's event at New York's Bethpage Black. May the force be with it!

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

To **Phil Mickelson** and his Saturday shenanigans, which took some of the heat off the USGA and its third round U.S. Open course set-up of Shinnecock Hills. We may have to give Phil the rare "double Grainy," one for this blatant disrespect for our national

championship, his fellow competitors and the game with his nok-hockeying, and a second for his unforgettable, unmistakable and yet unsurprising explanation of how he thought he was taking advantage of the Rules. Six months later, and we're still scratching our heads.

WORST REMAKE

"Dumb and Dumber" was dumb enough. "Dumb and Dumber 2" even worse. Now we have D&D3, better known as the dumbering down done by the USGA on the Rules of Golf. Think you were confused before? The gray areas are vague that friends are sure to become enemies, golf pros will be hiding behind their counters and Rules experts may move up their retirement plans. Though give the Rules a chance, and maybe Lloyd, Harry and Sea Bass will finally get it . .

LIFETIME UN-ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

He made a broadcasting career of neither listening to nor learning agronomic facts, thought all forms of grass grew toward the setting sun, and even gave these august awards their name with his incessant rambling about down grain, vertical grain, cross grain and double grain. Finally, we get no grain as **Johnny Miller** hangs up his microphone after 29 years in the NBC/Golf

Channel booth. We'll miss you Johnny ... well, about as much as we miss every putt due to the grain. Be careful as you walk toward the setting sun.

BEST SUPPORTING SUPPORTERS

To PGA HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere), the flagship military program of PGA REACH, for introducing golf to veterans with disabilities as a way of enhancing their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being. The program reached more than 2,000 vets in 2018. In fact, here's a well-earned salute to all golf programs that work with veterans.

We're giving a second award in this category to new chairman Fred Ridley and the membership of Augusta National for opening up their club to an elite, new women's event, the Augusta National Women's Amateur. Meant to inspire young women to play golf and compete at the highest level, it's another example of this very private club doing more than most to support and help grow the game.

BEST RETURN OF A MUCH-MISSED STAR

Tiger Woods at the TOUR Championship. His return was good for golf, good for ratings and I'm sure East Lake director of agronomy Ralph Kepple didn't even mind the thousands of spectators tramping on the final fairway. And don't forget

Tiger's most emotional and hon-



est acting when he got choked up on the final green. We did, too!

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

To Alejandro Reyes, golf courses and estate manager of Le Golf National, host venue for this year's Ryder Cup. He had the course looking beautiful as well as dramatic. I probably should give Reyes the Best Special Effects Award, as well, because his course made the U.S. team disappear like Claude Rains from the competition after the first day. With an assist to the Euros, who know how to write a script.

WORST LEADING ACTRESS

Mother Nature. She staged a horror festival this year with hurricanes, copious amounts of rain, early snow, wildfires, oppressive heat and everything short of a plague of locusts. But for all she threw at superintendents everywhere, you guys made the best of the worst conditions and kept your courses open and playable. Unfortunately, we're likely to see many, many sequels of her bitchy behavior in the years to come, so be prepared.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT – SENIOR DIVISION

Hats off to the USGA and Chicago Golf Club for staging a memorable inaugural Senior Women's Open, and a huge shout-out to that Grande Dame of our grass-covered stages, Laura Davies, now the first-ever winner of both the U.S. Women's and Senior Women's Opens. Given the quality of the

women eligible to play in this event, it should be a winner for a long, long time.

WORST PRODUCING

Not sure who is to blame here so we're pointing a finger at everyone who helped ensure the U.S. team lost the Ryder Cup. Between the FedEx Cup and the PGA Tour's disregard for any events but their own, the players never had a chance. After a month of high-stress golf, topped off with the big-money TOUR Championship, the players walked off the last green at East Lake and onto a plane that took them to Paris that very night to a course most of them had never seen. Yes, the Europeans bond better as a team and seem to take more pride in how they play in this biennial event. But someone needs to look at the pre-Cup scheduling and work in some downtime. And let's not let the U.S. players off the hook, either: How many of them bothered to see the course before Ryder Cup week started?

BEST (OR IS IT BETS?) NEW TECHNOLOGY

Get ready for sports betting coming to golf. It's inevitable, which is sure to lead to questions of players betting on themselves (we're looking at you, Phil). Will the game's integrity be bismirched? Will the USGA step up and protect the sanctity of the game? Or will the "G" in USGA soon stand for "gambling?" If state governments are seeing potential gold mines in sports betting, can golf's governing bodies be far behind?

WORST ATTEMPT TO REMAKE A CLASSIC

We used to love the Thanksgiving weekend Skins Games. We gave none of that love to "The Match." Pay to watch Phil and Tiger? I don't think so. The highlight was the technical snafu that allowed thousands to watch for free. Even with the hype, pregame specials and side bets, this was one

"match" that didn't ignite. I agree with Lee Trevino: play these matches with your own cash!

BEST DIRECTOR

Year in, year out, Chris Dalhamer, superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links, prepares one of the planet's busiest courses for the worst and best players in the world at the PGA Tour's AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, the Champions Tour Pure Challenge and this past summer, the U.S. Amateur. Dalhamer leads his troops, grinds it out and puts a great product on the table without fanfare, self-promotion or pointing to past achievements. Don't believe me? Watch next summer when Pebble Beach hosts the 2019 U.S. Open Championship.

BEST SMALL ROLE ELIMINATED ENTIRELY

There were times we weren't sure what role **Holly Sonders** was playing on Fox Sports' golf broadcasts. Now we know: She was the magician's assistant. You know, the pretty girl that is made to disappear. We won't see Holly interviewing players or working the magic touchscreen any more, but we can't let her go without asking her to present the final Rainy. Here she comes, about to announce the 2018 Worst Direction Award. And the loser is....

WORST DIRECTION

This one was a runaway. Again. After guaranteeing there would be no repeat of the 2004 debacle at Shinnecock Hills, maestro Mike Davis and his USGA cast of characters bumbled, fumbled and stumbled their way through a U.S. Open so filled with miscues that they issued a mea culpa on live TV Saturday afternoon. And they couldn't even get that right, with the apology about as sincere as an Elizabeth Taylor wedding vow.

To avoid this award in the future? How about involving the host course superintendent a bit more ... **GCI**



PHIL MICKELSON COURTESY OF PEETLESNUMBER1.
MILLER COURTESY OF GUY CIPRIANO. SONDERS
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STEVE WRIGHT AND STAYING G2G

▼ Steve Wright received a Super Social Media Award from GCI's Pat Jones at the 2018 Golf Industry Show in San Antonio.

Parker Ferren remembers fellow Florida superintendent Steve Wright, who proved job success can be achieved without sacrificing a life away from the course.

In early November, the turf industry lost a dear friend. Steven Wright, CGCS, was the epitome of a superintendent. Most of us often struggle by reaching for the seemingly unobtainable: harmonious work life balance. Steve had it. He had it more than any superintendent I have ever met. He had it more than any PERSON I have ever met. He was the one guy that we all looked up to. The joyful, gregarious friend. The empathetic listener. The husband, father, superintendent, captain, friend and mentor.

Steve's example is enormously important because that "seemingly unobtainable" balance has been a very active topic recently throughout the industry. It is very difficult this day and age to find a positive balance between work and home life. Fortunately, stress management and mental

health are being discussed openly more than ever before. It is finally "socially acceptable" to discuss some of the issues that we once kept to ourselves.



Ferren

The golf course consumes so much of our time that we become literally attached, sometimes neglecting important responsibilities and relationships. It seems to me that most superintendents fall into one of two categories – the husband who spends too much time at work and not enough time at home, or the superintendent who doesn't work



"enough" hours, possibly neglecting responsibilities at the golf course. Rarely – and I mean very rarely – does a superintendent find that perfect balance with a healthy personal life and a golf course that is always in tip top shape and "G2G" (a Steve-ism for "good to go"). I think that's what drew so many of us to Steve. He radiated success and happiness and made it seem so effortless.

His ability to lead and set the bar high from a turf management standpoint was only one small notch in his belt. It was his passion for life which resonated so much with others. His infectious smile and humble, calm demeanor was addicting. He had a positive influence on everyone he came across.

I remember traveling to Orlando with him many years ago when I first moved to South Florida. As a young kid fresh out of school cutting my teeth in the industry, I was more excited to spend time with him in the car and pick his brain during the three-hour drive than I was for the trip itself! The chance to spend some one-on-one time with such a well-respected superintendent was quite intriguing. Turns out, we didn't really talk much turf. All he could talk about was his wife and kids, and how important it was to balance career and family. I knew at that point that I needed him as a mentor.

He rose to the top of the industry while keeping his happiness, sanity and family life at the forefront of

his attention. His passion for the turf industry and helping others was visible through his most recent service as vice president of the Florida GCSA, past president of the Palm Beach GCSA and the Carolinas GCSA. He served at nearly every level and most would consider him an ambassador here in the state of Florida by championing

many great causes and issues affecting turf professionals. Words just can't capture the respect that fellow superintendents across the nation had for Steve. He was the go-to guy for advice on issues ranging from agronomic problems all the way to professionalism and ethics. He was the one we all called when we had personal issues or battles to overcome. He was the one writing in industry magazines offering advice on relaxing techniques for the busy superintendent and how to make a positive impact on someone's life. And he was the one passing out donuts to his crew while they were walk-mowing greens on Christmas morning.

Many who never had the opportunity to meet Steve followed him on social media. His Twitter and Facebook posts almost always embraced the perfect #sflalife he lived and cherished. If he was not working, he could often be found fishing, golfing, travel-



Steve Wright, third from left, frequently participated in industry events, including golf outings with fellow superintendents.

ing and spending time with his wonderful family and friends. The love for his wife and three children was more than evident. To say he lived his life to the fullest would be an understatement.

That impact that Steve had on so many men and women throughout this industry will never be forgotten. More importantly, the lessons he directly and indirectly passed on to others will have a lasting impression on everyone who met him. Yes, he helped shape

MANY great superintendents. But I think the greatest lesson that we can learn from his wonderful life is that the dream we all chase in the pursuit of happiness is easier to obtain than we may think. Work hard. Play harder. Love others. Keep it simple and we will all be G2G. **GCI**

Parker Ferren is the grounds and golf superintendent at St. Andrews Club in Delray Beach, Fla. He's also the president of the Palm Beach GCSA.

“His ability to lead and set the bar high from a turf management standpoint was only one small notch in his belt. It was his passion for life which resonated so much with others.”

COLD NOVEMBER RAIN

Jason Hollen reflects on why he continues to rise early and stay late to protect turfgrass from an uncontrollable force.

As I sit down to put pen to paper, it is raining again. And by again, I mean it really feels like it has been constant since August. After a weather season like this, it's good to finally sit down and reflect.

The first and only question I ask is: "Why do I continue to do this?" Why constantly battle with an immovable force (Mother Nature) that always wins? On top of that, why fight thousands of people critiquing your decisions, your intelligence and even your work ethic? I venture to say this is how professional athletes, actors and politicians feel. What's the answer?

I could say the standard lines of:

- I like the outside (yet there are other "outside" careers);
- I like the people (yet there are other careers with great people);
- I need to support my family and/or myself (don't we all?);
- I love the game of golf (well duh!).

What is the answer?

This season has been an eye-opener for me, and I have

social media and this family of turf professionals to thank for that. It is easy to keep your head down and plow along, but looking outside my own course helped me realize others were experiencing similar situations. Maybe it wasn't too much rain or heat like me, but it could've been cold and not enough moisture or any combination of awfulness. Regardless of the climate situation, the toll is the same on all of us and our sanity.



Hollen

I love seeing all the beautiful pictures and quotes on Twitter and Instagram. It's great. I also post. But candid posts and videos about lost turf, high expectations versus the weather, and the need to balance our

lives really impacted me. This last one hammered home hard-stress with me.

Over the years, I have come to realize I have been feeding my inner perfectionist trait at the cost of lost time with those most important to me. The work-life balance was tipping too far to the work side. It is tough to explain to your wife "why you hate summer" now. And I certainly could not ex-

plain it to my little daughter, who happens to be part mermaid. The truth is I don't hate summer. I love it. I just don't like how it treats my fickle bentgrass in the Transition Zone.

In years past, I would internalize the negative results of tough weather conditions, shrinking budgets and harsh guest surveys. I wasn't the friendliest person at times during the summer. And over what? Conditions I could not control. Sound familiar?

I previously viewed Twitter as a bunch of noise. The world's longest backyard gossip fence, as I read somewhere once. But now it is a source of humor and provides a great way to connect with others fighting the same issues. I was able to see and read others' stories and take a step back from my own daily world. I started to see others going through similar triumphs and struggles. I did not feel so alone.

I am glad that we, as a profession, are starting to address mental health and work-life balance. It's good to discuss it openly. We've always shared everything about turf. The same can increasingly be said about mental wellness. We have stressful careers. Taking

care of a living, breathing, dynamic entity that we cede ultimate control to the weather is tough. But no matter how strong you are individually, a supportive community backing you sure feels good. And that goes for everyone whether they are friends at the top of your speed dial, someone you meet at a conference or colleague on the other side of the country you follow on social media.

Why do I continue to do this?

The simple one-word answer is "it." What is "it?" Honestly, I don't know. Some will call it passion and I've been known to call it that, too. I'm passionate about the West Virginia Mountaineers, but I don't get up every morning at 4 a.m. for them. There's a powerful energy deep in my core that drives me through the wake-up alarms, frustrating call-offs, impatient golfers and odds-stacked-against-you weather conditions. I'll bet you have "it" too and sometimes you feel isolated. But, fortunately, because of this family we have created, none of us need ever be alone. **GCI**

Jason Hollen is the golf course and grounds superintendent at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, W.Va.



HIS NAME WAS PAT

Matthew Wharton wonders if more can be done to help superintendents experiencing mental health struggles.

The year was 2004 and I walked to the San Diego Convention Center very early that morning because I wanted to find my room before others arrived. I was registered for a full-day seminar (we used to do that regularly back in those days) and was excited to be in California for the first time.

After locating my seminar room, I stepped out back of the convention center onto the large area overlooking the beautiful marina. The weather was perfect and the view stunning. There was one other guy out there taking it in and he said hello. His name was

Patrick Connell, CGCS, and he was the golf course superintendent of New Burn Country Club in New Burn, N.C.

A little while later we discovered we were in the same seminar and as the week of Conference and Show continued (it wasn't called the Golf Industry Show until 2005), we would continue to bump

into one another. I recall Pat telling me about a former boss of his who explained each year at the Conference and Show there is this one guy you meet and the two of you always seem to continue crossing paths

throughout the week. I guess in 2004 Pat was my guy and I was

his, as if fate was trying to encourage us to become friends.

At that time, I was superintendent of Swan Point Yacht & CC in Issue, Md. I didn't relocate to Charlotte, N.C., until May 2005 and it wasn't until November 2006 that I attended my first Carolinas GCSA Conference & Show in Myrtle Beach, S.C. I think I continued to see and reunite with Pat at both GIS in Orlando 2005 and Atlanta 2006, but in November 2006 I definitely remember seeing and reconnecting with Pat. I was now the superintendent of Carolina Golf Club and a member of the same GCSAA chapter. As the years went by, we would always make time to sit together during the general education sessions and catch up with one another in Myrtle Beach. I always looked forward to seeing Pat.

In time, I became involved with my local association in the greater Charlotte area, the North-South Turfgrass Association and served on its board of directors from 2009-13, including President in 2013. Even though Pat was across the state and member of a different local

association, we would talk several times throughout the year. Mainly it was because we both managed bentgrass putting greens and it was always therapeutic to share the experiences of summer, but Pat would also routinely express his thoughts and ideas about the chapter as if he knew someday I would serve on the board.

(Side note: I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Carolinas GCSA in November 2014 and was elected President for 2019 at last month's Conference and Show.)

I'm embarrassed to admit I didn't pay close enough attention then to all the signals that were right there at the time. When I look back on my relationship with Pat and our times together, he generally seemed unhappy. He complained a great deal about his club, board, committee, GM, etc. It was a struggle in Pat's eyes to produce the level of conditioning New Burn CC desired and he desired to produce with the resources and support he was provided. Obviously, I was someone Pat felt comfortable venting those frustrations to and I recall one phone conversation where he expressed more should be done and provided by the association.

At the time, I wasn't entirely sure what he meant, but I think Pat's work-related struggles were an ever-increasing stress on him mentally and physically. I think Pat was asking for mental health assistance from either the chapter or GCSAA long before mental health became a "hot topic" on social media like present day.

Which is why I'm writing this. I missed the early signs Pat was sharing with me in those days, but the reality is this



Wharton

“Older generations were viewed as tough guys because they didn’t show their feelings and they tended to keep things bottled up, at least until they had consumed enough from a bottle to release those frustrations in other ways.”

wonderful job we all love and enjoy can be stressful. Older generations were viewed as tough guys because they didn’t show their feelings and they tended to keep things bottled up, at least until they had consumed enough from a bottle to release those frustrations in other ways.

This past year I saw many different posts on social media encouraging men, and women to talk about their mental health. I’ve been an International Member of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association since 2010 and BIGGA is definitely making a conscious effort to provide educational content to their members to help raise awareness and provide outlets for relief. I have served on the GCSAA Conference Education Task Group for the past three consecutive years and during our meeting in Lawrence, Kan., earlier this year to select the educational offerings at next year’s GIS, I mentioned how BIGGA has made the topic of mental health a priority and suggested GCSAA do likewise.

Back to Pat. He eventually resigned from New Burn CC and left the business. I’ve always thought somehow the business failed him. Pat was

a darn good superintendent, but the stress overwhelmed him to the point he elected to walk away from a career he worked hard to achieve. I’m embarrassed to admit when I lost my phone in 2014 and all my contacts, I lost touch with Pat. Through the years, I’ve managed to rebuild an extensive network of contacts, but Pat still eludes me. Earlier this year when the idea for this article first struck me, I managed to track down a number on file with Carolinas GCSA, but messages left at that number were never returned.

If you or someone you know sounds like Pat, encourage them to talk about their struggles and listen to them more closely than I ever did to Pat. And Pat, if you’re out there somewhere, please know I’m sorry I didn’t do enough to help you when you needed it the most. The golf course superintendent fraternity lost a good one when Pat left the business. I sincerely hope in 2019 the brotherhood and sisterhood bands together to take better care of ourselves and one another. **GCI**

Matthew Wharton, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Carolina Golf Club in Charlotte, N.C.

ARE YOU DOING A GOOD JOB AT KEEPING THAT “LIFE BALANCE?”

Greg Cormier puts a different label on a topic confounding numerous superintendents.

I recently had a conversation with one of my mentors who said, “I don’t know why it has to be a work-life balance. Isn’t work part of your life?” We hear that term so much in our industry and I am sure you have heard one or more of the following from various people speaking or writing to superintendents:



Cormier

- Make sure you keep a good work-life balance.
- I’m changing jobs for more of a work-life balance.
- I could never work the hours you do because I like having more of a work-life balance.
- I can’t believe you work seven days a week. I could never do that.
- You are going to miss your kids growing up. You really should find a better work-life balance.

Maybe it’s better to say that because work is part of your life, it doesn’t have to be one or the other, just simply “life balance.” Think of it like eating a balanced diet to stay physically healthy: you can and should lead a balanced life to keep you mentally healthy.

We all know people who dread Monday mornings and can’t wait until Friday evening because their entire life is spent not liking their job. As a superintendent, driving to work you hear someone on the radio counting how many days are left until the big three-day holiday weekend. You

think, "I'll be working all three days, because it's one of my course's most important tournaments of the year." As we all know, a career in golf course management is a lifestyle, not a job.

The old saying if you find a job that you love, you will never work a day in your life comes into play here. One of the greatest things about being the head superintendent at a golf course is that you usually have the ability to make decisions all day, every day to either positively or negatively impact the golf course, your career and your quality of life. In other words, you are in control of your life and how much time you allocate to each activity that you do.

The best superintendents work very hard at getting the right team of people in place. Depending on others allows you to share the workload when you chose to be away from the golf course. If you try to do it all yourself and call every shot at work, at home or in other groups you are a part of, life becomes too stressful and overwhelming. Some superintendents may not have the budget or resources to build a team of more than two or three people. In this case, they better be two or three really good people. If not, you need to help the management and/or ownership understand why they need to invest in quality people instead of doing it all yourself, getting burned out and then becoming unhappy. In that case, if your boss expects you to do it alone, maybe it's time to work for a different facility.

I think what people mean when they say work-life balance is that you never want to focus so much on one aspect of

your life that you miss something else. It's similar on the golf course. If you only focus on having great greens, you might suddenly realize the tees have very little grass on them – and then you are rushing to repair them.

Here are three examples you could try to implement to improve your life balance. Some may fit your situation, others may not:

1. Find a "career assistant." Mentor someone and help them gain the knowledge and skill to become a great assistant superintendent. The days of requiring a turf degree and past golf course experience are over. Find a great person who is willing to learn and achieve these things with your help. (Take a close look at your existing crew to see if he or she is already there.) Maybe they can become a "permanent" assistant superintendent to help balance out your workload. Not everyone wants to be a head superintendent, especially if you can pay them a fair salary they can live on. You can still have other team members that come and go every three to five years if you want to. It's great to mentor people and see them move up and on, but maybe one of them could stay for a while and help you. This person should be able to fill in for you when you are not there.

2. Become a better leader. Recognize that the more your staff knows, the more they can help you and you can rely on them. You don't have to show them you are the boss by being the one who makes all

decisions. If your staff knows how to make some of these decisions on their own, and you encourage them to do so, you won't feel like you need to be everywhere at once. This may even allow you to put down your radio and phone while you are trying to type that important email or work on your budget. They know you are the boss. Share responsibilities. It helps others grow and gives you more time.

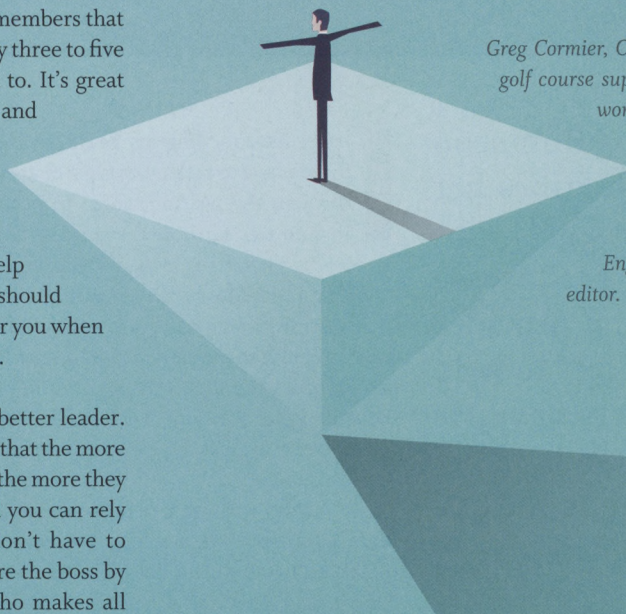
3. Utilize technology to become more efficient. There are so many tools available now to improve efficiency in the workplace. If you can communicate with staff, share information and access information faster using these tools, then why not do it? It can be scary to change your tried and true methods, but those who are utilizing technology are making their jobs easier and saving themselves time. From irrigation management to fleet maintenance records, agronomic planning tools, digital job boards, social media

to communicate with golfers, there are numerous ways to become more efficient.

The bottom line is find a job that you are passionate about and balance your life. Rely on your team to support you when you leave the course to attend an important event for your kid, a grandparent's milestone birthday, backyard BBQ or a family weekend getaway. It's about quality time spent with family, not quantity. If you force yourself to take a certain day off for "family time," but you are either sleeping on the couch or feeling like you should have been at work, then it isn't time well spent. Don't be ashamed if you went in for a few hours and then spent quality time the rest of the day with family or friends.

Remember, the key to finding that "life balance" isn't necessarily cutting back to 40 hours a week or taking all weekends off. It's about being happy and being in control of your life and your schedule so that you can allocate your time as needed. **GCI**

Greg Cormier, CGCS, is a former golf course superintendent who works for Massachusetts-based Tom Irwin, Inc. He's the GCSA of New England's newsletter editor.





COPING WITH ANXIETY

Moe Robinson describes her struggles with the disease and provides strategies to help others navigate overwhelming moments.

I have been racking my brain trying to decide how to tackle the topic of anxiety through the written word. In person, I could talk for hours, even days about it. So why is putting pen to paper such a daunting task? Maybe it's because the topic of anxiety in today's culture is still so taboo? Most people who suffer hold it in because they cannot articulate their feelings and they are convinced they are alone. Personally, I like to tell my story in hopes that it might help others to learn from it.

My journey with anxiety began roughly 13 years ago. I have come a long way from my first panic attack and for those who have never experienced the physical symptoms, consider

yourself blessed. First, there's sweating and a racing heart, then it adds in shortness of breath with a tight chest, a tingling sensation in your hands and feet, and the grand finale of dizziness and feeling like you are about to pass out.

The only thing that comes to mind when experiencing an acute panic episode is that you're having a heart attack. You truly feel as though death is a real possibility. During my initial attack, I rushed to the hospital to be seen by a doctor. I was moderately relieved when I learned that I had suffered a panic attack. Little did I know how long the healing process would be and how the intense fear of those symptoms returning would linger.

Panic attacks are on the extreme end of



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the spectrum for most people who experience anxiety. Most are fortunate enough never to experience them directly, but still end up living with a more generalized anxiety disorder.



Robinson

This type of anxiety may be less acute than the panic episodes, but it can still take over your life.

Simple tasks such as going to the grocery store become more difficult than climbing a mountain. You have to get yourself psyched up for something as trivial as standing in line. Some days even getting out of bed can seem impossible. Your life changes to the point that you have to relearn simple, everyday tasks, all the while dealing with the new co-pilot of anxiety.

Everyone who lives with or has had an intimate relationship with anxiety usually asks themselves the same question, "How do I make it go away?" I wish there was a simple answer to that question, but unfortunately that isn't the case. The path of healing and learning to live with the reality of anxiety is a lifelong journey. It starts with recognizing and accepting the existence of what you are feeling. Denying or burying them only serves to strengthen them. Then, with the help of professionals, you can begin to learn how to train your mind and develop

Each individual has different triggers. Becoming aware of your default storylines and habits is an important step in understanding your new feelings. There are many things that can serve to fuel anxious thoughts, and by learning to identify them we can gain

some measure of control over how we relate to them. Basic selfcare is critical and I have found that adequate sleep and a regular diet help tremendously in reducing my anxiety.

Taking care of oneself is vital, but we also need to practice relating to the world around us in a whole new way.

As turf managers, it can appear that we have a long list of stressors that rest squarely on our shoulders. Member expectation, staff issues, board meetings, weather patterns, disease and pest pressures are among the daily issues we deal with. If we let them, the rigors of the job can easily translate into a sense of being overwhelmed. If one or all of these situations causes you anxiety, then it can be helpful to step back and become curious about how you are relating to it.

For example, do you sense stress when a staff member is not performing to the same standard you might hold yourself to? Is it realistic to expect that everyone should work with as much precision and passion as yourself? Each person has their own skill set and set of beliefs and should be treated as individuals. When I finally learned this lesson, it completely changed my leadership style. I now have an unobstructed view of each person's idiosyncratic ways and work to utilize those qualities to develop a more harmonious work environment. This slight shift in perception went a long way in reducing my anxiety and created a better workplace for my employees.

By learning to deal effectively with anxiety, we are



POSITIVE COPING SUGGESTIONS AND RESOURCES

Mindfulness, Yoga, Music, Art, Exercise, Sports, Podcasts, Concentrated Breathing, Vocalizing, Meditation, Reading

Jon Kabat-Zinn, professor emeritus of medicine, mindfulness teacher, author of "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life"

Susan David, PH.D, psychologist, podcaster, author of "Emotional Agility"

Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, philosopher, motivational speaker and self-help author of "Your Erroneous Zones"

Gretchen Rubin, blogger, speaker, author of "The Four Tendencies"

Jack Kornfield, Buddhist practitioner, mindfulness teacher, and author of "Meditation for Beginners"

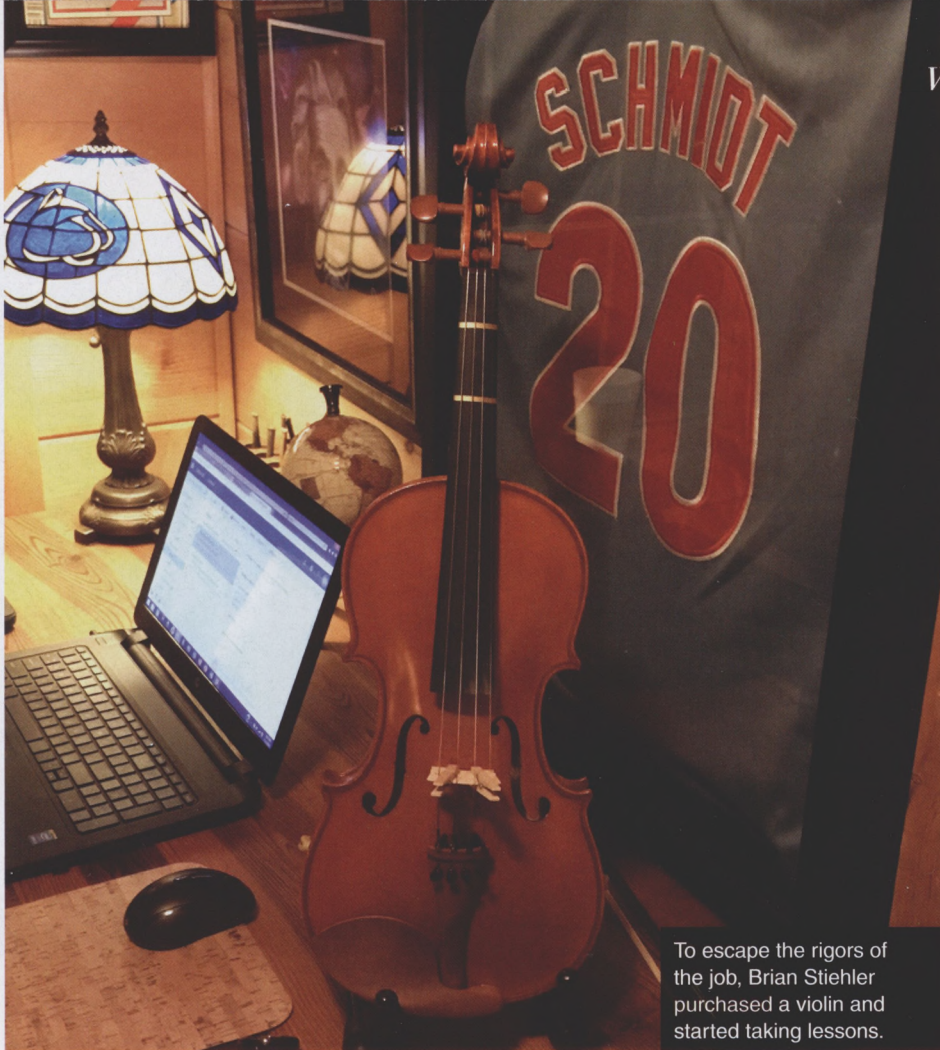
creating a new relationship with our thoughts, emotions and tendencies. Some of the more effective coping skills that you can focus on include mindfulness meditation practice, playing sports and exercising, reading, listening to music, or even just a quiet walk in the woods.

Personally, I have adopted concentrated breathing strategies into my life. When I feel an anxiety flare coming on, I pause and focus on my breathing. Taking long deep inhales through my nose, exhaling slowly through my mouth and taking care to make the in-and-out breaths an equal length. Slowing your breath and concentrating on it is proven to help slow your heart rate and relax you. But how do you deal with the other sensations? I like to focus on art or baking when I feel the need to distract myself. Using your favorite hobbies can be a very effective way to calm you down and bring you back

to the present moment.

It is my sincere hope that this article is only the beginning of a discussion that more people will participate in. The more we talk about mental illness in an open way, the more we reduce the stigma and its power to control our lives. We need to let people know that it's okay to feel anxious and it is perfectly normal to become overwhelmed. As a society, we need to recognize that people are imperfectly great and to understand that this ride of life is full of highs and lows. By learning to navigate these waves with compassion and vulnerability, we can begin to truly change our relationship with anxiety. **GCI**

Moe Robinson is superintendent at Summerlea Golf Club in Port Perry, Ontario, and consulting superintendent at Western Trent Golf Club in Bolsover, Ontario. Enter <https://goo.gl/gxS5ZG> into your web browser to hear a podcast accompanying this article.



To escape the rigors of the job, Brian Stiehler purchased a violin and started taking lessons.

STRATEGIES FOR BETTER BALANCE

Brian Stiehler provides tactics for separating work responsibilities from your home life.

At the age of 14, I got my first job working on a golf course and by age 15, I was committed to the profession that I knew I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

I was lucky in that regard, but it could also be viewed as a detriment. I wasn't very open-minded to alternative

ideas and areas of study. However, I was very fortunate to have numerous mentors who guided me on decision making when it came to college and doing internships. They explained to me the pros and cons of the business



Stiehler

and helped me in ways I never could have imagined.

During the next couple years, I made the most out of this time. I worked at several different clubs in different parts of the world. As a young person

enamored with the potential of this business, there was a lot of different aspects of this work that I didn't see just yet.

After graduating from Penn State and receiving my first "real" job as an assistant superintendent, I began to see some of the aspects of this profession that I wasn't privy to in my past job experiences. Work-life balance is one of those terms we hear a lot about it. Personally, it's something I strive for but recognize that I often fall short on. I've learned that some folks in the business are naturally better at this than others. Having the ability to separate work and your home life is a desirable skill to have in this business. At the same time, being focused on work at all hours of the day can be beneficial in your professional life, but it certainly takes its toll on you personally.

Growing up, I had a father who was an electrical engineer and worked as the general manager of maintenance at a specialty steel corporation in Reading, Pa. I can remember him leaving for work early and returning at 6 p.m. every night. It was a great example for me to see a man committed to his job, yet more committed to his family. By most standards, he worked long hours, but when he was home, the focus was on family. We always had dinner together. He had the ability to put work beside and focus on the task at hand – us.

Unfortunately, as I worked my way up through this business, it didn't always come that easy to me. Balancing my family and life is something I feel like I've had to work hard at. Here are a few examples of things that I've done to help myself become a more balanced and well-rounded person.

Become better at managing your time. This can mean many things. I constantly remind myself that I am not a superhero able to be all things to all people. I focus on those things I am good at and rely on help from my staff by delegating other tasks that I'm not so great at. Like most superintendents, I am a morning person. I found it's better for me to hit the less desirable daily tasks I have head on, in the morning, while I am most energized. I save those tasks I enjoy more for late morning or afternoon. It is important to recognize when you are at your best and take advantage of those times.

Keep looking forward. As a young person in the business, our successes were more frequent and life-changing. However, once settled into a position, it becomes our responsibilities to stay engaged and challenged. A quote on my desk reminds me, "What would need to happen in the next two to three years for you to look back on that same time as a success?" We need to look ahead and believe the next three years will be the most important and successful of our lives.

Take time off. To keep a positive outlook on my work, it is necessary to get away from time to time. Working a marathon-like schedule of 30 to 60 days (or more) without taking time off doesn't do anyone any favors. My family and I developed an annual trip where we pick a city we've never been to and then go there. This allows us, especially my 14-year-old daughter, to experience different cultures across the country. In addition to these types of trips, we've always made our chapter's (Carolinas GCSA)

Conference and Show as well as the Golf Industry Show a family trip. Not only does it get us out of town, but there is nothing like networking with colleagues to put our business lives into perspective.

Find a Hobby! We all need something to occupy our time with outside of work. Hobbies can get your mind off work and energize us. It gives us something to look forward to and work toward. While the game of golf has always been important to me, I find that playing at the course where I work can be stressful and not relaxing. I find myself beating myself up, and like many of us, our worst critic. As a child, I played violin for five years. Last year, I purchased a violin and started taking weekly lessons. Playing the violin along with model trains (also a hobby from childhood) gives me plenty to do outside of work. These are activities that I thoroughly enjoy and give me something to focus on besides work. Make the time to do something you love and give it the time it deserves.

Allocate enough resources. This is a tough one in the golf business. We all are doing more to show our value to our employers and many of us are forced to continue to take on more roles within an operation. At the same time, it is important to learn to say, "no" when you are asked to take



Collecting model trains helps Brian Stiehler boost his work-life balance.

on additional responsibilities if you know it isn't realistic. Don't be a martyr. When you try to do everything perfectly and resist help, you end up creating more stress for yourself and ultimately your family. Furthermore, a staff of five will never be able to do the work of 15 regardless of the amount of overtime worked. Make sure your team understands what the priorities are. This can save a lot of wasted time. As leaders, it's important to be diligent about constantly setting priorities and helping our teams understand what they are.

Keep an eye out for each other! Keeping an eye on the entire team can make everyone happier and more productive. Promote a healthy work-life balance at your course and start by setting the example. Hold your team accountable for taking the time off they are allotted. Encourage your

staff to use that time off and away from work. In a business where many are continuing to do more with less, this many sound impossible. However, it is critical to develop creative work schedules to allow staff to get time off. There are some really good people in this business who have developed creative working hours for their team.

Finally, keep in mind the definition of the word balance. Life will never be perfectly dissected down the middle with 50 percent of your time focused on work and 50 percent focused on life. The goal is to achieve a healthy balance of the two over time, recognizing there will be times when work does consume your time. The goal is to achieve a balance and never let one of them monopolize your life. **GCI**

Brian Stiehler, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Highlands Country Club in Highlands, N.C.



UNLEASH

YOUR INNER Ansel Adams:

Digital Photography for Turfheads

Donovan Maguigan explains how that little phone in your pocket can take enduring turf photos.

Aperture, shutter speed, vignette, ISO, bokeh, f-stop, macro. Bored yet?

Those are all heavy-duty photography terms that are completely unnecessary to understand in order to take great photographs. Complicated setups, special lenses, filters, flashes and an expensive digital camera are also unnecessary. If you have a smartphone, the tool for you to take quality photos of your golf course has been in your pocket the whole time. Beyond a simple communica-

tion and documentation tool, your smartphone camera can be used to showcase your property, your staff, their work and the most photogenic aspects of the profession.

Even the simplest and cheapest smartphones have better cameras than top-of-the-line digital cameras 15 years ago. From the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 to the rollout of the iPhoneXS in 2018, smartphone camera technology has grown exponentially in quality and simplicity.

Blurry photos from smart-

phones are a thing of the past. You can point, click, edit and share high-quality photos in a matter of seconds. Cloud storage and uploading to wireless storage has replaced the need to connect a memory stick to a computer and has allowed superintendents to take photos without the fear of running out of memory or using up hard drive space.

With smartphone photography, you have the paint, pal-



Maguigan

ette and canvas to showcase the work you and your staff do. More importantly, you can use your smartphone to document the work you complete on your golf course, share the quality of your staff's work and promote your property.

I am not a photography expert by any means, but I'm a passionate enthusiast. Here are some tips that have helped me take more and better photos.



1. CHANGE YOUR PHOTO SETTINGS

a. Turn on HDR. "High Dynamic Range," or HDR, is a setting that takes multiple photos and combines them for optimum light and exposure. These photos are larger than normal photos but correct numerous photo errors.

b. Set your camera to take the highest quality setting. With the largest and highest quality images, you will be able to edit, share and print the photos without losing the quality of the image. When cropping or editing photos, quality will start to diminish, so it's best to start with a large

and high-quality photo.

c. Turn Off Auto Flash. In all likelihood, you will be outside and don't need the flash. Turn on the flash only when you need it.

d. Experiment with different photo modes. All of the major smartphone brands feature multiple modes tailored for food, landscapes and burst mode. Burst mode is great for capturing a moment of something that is in motion. To take a burst photo, simply hold the shutter button. After the burst is finished, you can select a single or multiple photos from the batch.

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2. USE THE "RULE OF THIRDS."



Imagine a 3x3 grid across the photograph. Your subject should be aligned to the intersection of those squares. To visualize this easily, turn on the "Photo Grid" on your smartphone. This will place a 3x3 grid across the image and help you compose your photo. This grid will also aide you in straightening your image by giving you a linear reference point.



3. UTILIZE "BRACKETING."

The freedom of being able to take hundreds of pictures gives you options without having to risk a crooked or blurry photograph. Bracketing is the process of taking multiple photos with variations of the flash, brightness, angle or focus. Maximize the benefit of bracketing by waiting until you can see the photos larger on a tablet or computer before deleting the photographs.

GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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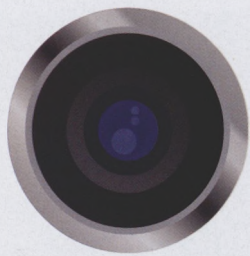
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4. CLEAN YOUR CAMERA LENS (OR CASE).

Dirt and fingerprints will adversely affect your photos just like a normal camera. A quick wipe from a soft cloth (or a golf shirt) can remove blurs or smudges that will impact your photos and the phone's sensors. Phone cases sometimes have a cover over the camera lens and this can become dirty or scratched as well.

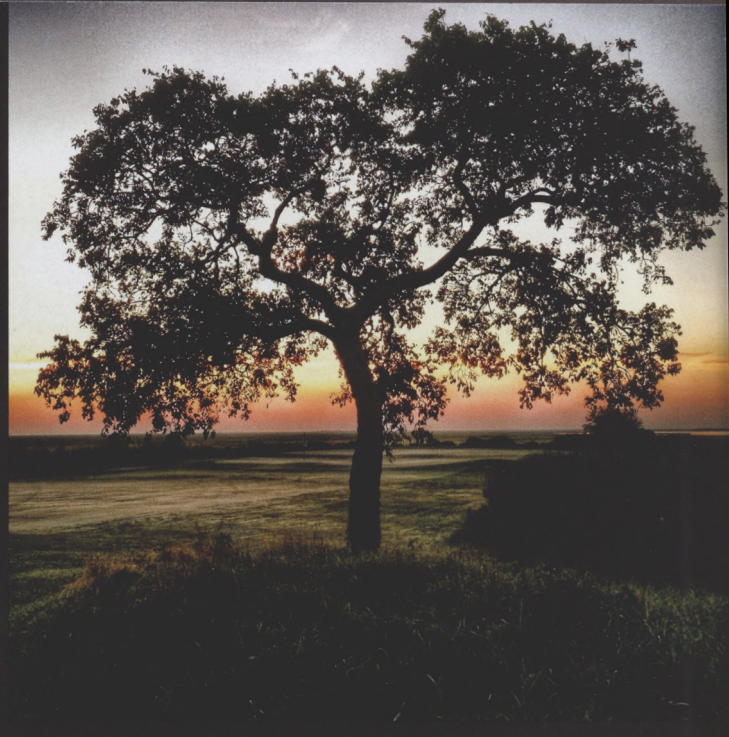


6. HIGHLIGHT "NON-TURFGRASS" DETAILS.

Use flags, tee markers, accessories, logo balls and unique structures that make your property special in your pictures.

5. FIND UNIQUE PHOTO ANGLES.

Golfers see the course in a tee to green direction, so take photographs from under-utilized angles. For example, down at turf level, from behind a bunker, next to a specimen tree or from the top of a course structure.





7. BECOME A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER.

Or just photograph wildlife. As stewards of the environment, your properties are filled with beautiful examples of wildlife and fauna that our courses protect in green space. Word of caution: of all the subjects to photograph, wildlife is consistently challenging to photograph. The results are typically large swaths of green with multicolored specs, so be patient.



8. FIND YOUR LOOK.

Find a style that is unique and fun for you to take photos. About a year ago, I started taking more and more black and white photographs, to the point where it feels like the only way I can take photos. Have a golf course dog? Try incorporating your four-legged assistant in every photograph.



9. BACKUP TO CLOUD STORAGE.

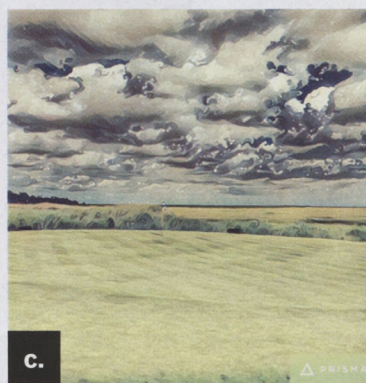
Google, Amazon and Apple all offer solid automatic photo backup options for smartphones and tablets with some options at no-cost. Use this option to protect your photos from accidental loss or to view your photos on a larger screen to edit them later. Take photos and wait to review them when you have time to look at them on a larger screen.



10. TWEAK IT.

There are several easy to use and free apps that allow you to tweak and adjust your photos easily. There are also apps that will animate, turn your photos into drawings, or make collages. Some favorites of mine include:

- a.** Snapseed (Android/iOS). Great for adding filters and making adjustments with preset filters. My favorite filter is "Drama," which accents the sharpness and the contrast between light and dark. That filter is amazing at accenting clouds or stripes.
- b.** Collage (Android/iOS). Combines photos together into collages. This app work great if trying to condense several photos for a social media post or for before and after photos.
- c.** Prisma (Android/iOS). This app will apply a unique painting style to your photos, while hit or miss, it makes some very awesome images for social media.



11. SHARE IT.

Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook or on your blog. The list is ever-growing with ways to share things across social media and the internet. Take the time to showcase your staff's hard work and dedication. Remember, if this isn't something that you would want on the front page of a newspaper, it's probably not the best idea to share it on social media. Additionally, check with your club or ownership about their guidelines for sharing content of their property. **GCI**

Donovan Maguigan is the South Course superintendent at Lake of Isles in North Stonington, Conn. He can be found on Twitter and Instagram at @McBuckeyeAT.

THE VALUE OF HAVING A WRITTEN AND APPROVED STANDARDS POLICY

Written standards that have been approved by ownership are the basis from which all programs are developed, including budgeting. It does not matter what type of golf course or club you are at ... someone is in charge and needs to be involved of drafting this policy and approving it in writing. Once approved, this policy will detail how the club wishes to have each component of the course maintained. In other words, it establishes the expectations of the club and the members.



Grigg

You can break down the process into the following three steps:

1. Tell me what level of standards you desire and expect (standards policy);
2. Then I can develop the programs to achieve that standard (maintenance plan);
3. Then I can estimate what it will cost (budget).

Put together a small committee to help put the policy together. It should consist of green committee members, BOD members,

men's golf members, women's golf members and senior members of the staff such as the golf professional or club manager. Depending on the type of club you are at, it may include those who manage the club, whether it's hotel, city, management group, a general manager or director of golf. I once did a standards policy that only had one person on the committee – the owner. I wanted him to sign off on his expectations for the course.

A short survey to establish what the membership or patrons want – or need – can be very valuable in establishing your standard policy. A well-worded survey will help this standards committee.

What is to be the standard for the greens (including speed), tees, fairways, bunkers, roughs and out-of-play areas? Don't forget native areas, trees and flower beds.

This should be very detailed. Standards for greens, for example, should include mowing, rolling, topdressing, aeration/cultivation, irrigation, fertilization, hole placement and soil amendments.

What is the tolerance for weeds and other pests? This may differ with parts of the course. I would even name each weed, pest and disease, and the chemical applications needed to control them, so the committee understands what you are up against.

Once completed, it serves two roles: to give a definitive measurement tool for your work and to help you in your budget. If you budget to the standards policy and they do not like the budget, you can tell them they need to either adjust the budget or adjust the standards.

Many budgets are being cut to the point where frustrated superintendents are trying to maintain the same golf course to the same standards with less resources. And too many superintendents are losing their jobs for "not meeting the club's expectations." You need to understand their expectations and those approving your budget need to know what their expectations will cost so they can be approved or adjusted. Standards must adjust to the means. The best way to do that is to have a written document everyone can read, understand and buy into.

With good standards in place, upper management will have to think hard before they eliminate needed programs, rather than just changing a dollar figure in your budget. And in the process of budget review, the superintendent who develops and adheres to good standards will be seen as an able manager of the facility's money and resources. **GCI**

Gary T. Grigg CGCS, MG, is the vice president and agronomist at GRIGG.



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INTEGRATED
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MANAGEMENT:

Does It Still “Play in Peoria?”

Andy Morris revisits a topic *Golf
Course Industry* explored 11 years ago.

I recently ran into Pat Jones at the Green Start Academy. Pat and I have known each other for over a decade and back in 2007 he wrote an article about our management team and the Country Club of Peoria. The article focused on how we had integrated our management team and how we worked and communicated together. Pat asked if I could write an update or “the rest of the story” about the club today and how it has adapted after a decade. He passed along a copy of that February 2007 article and I took a stroll down memory lane as I looked it over. In reading the article, I realized how our club has changed and evolved over the years, and yet the core management principles that were established back in 2007 are still in place.





FROM THE ARCHIVES

Andy Morris and the Country Club of Peoria team were featured on Golf Course Industry's February 2007 cover. The story, written by Pat Jones, describes how Morris, golf pro Scott Brownfield and then-GM Mark Bado were working together to help the club adapt to a changing private club marketplace. Enter <https://goo.gl/qFuJL4> into your web browser to read the article.

Furthermore, Bado, now the general manager at Myers Park Country Club in Charlotte, N.C., wrote an article in GCI's 2016 Turfheads Take Over issue about integrated team management and relationships. Enter <https://goo.gl/PDEKTP> into your web browser to read Bado's thoughts.

For a club that is 121 years old, we are still in the game. Our membership has always stayed in the 450- to 500-member range and as managers we have learned to operate and control costs around that revenue stream. Since 2007, we have had four general manager changes and an interim GM to fill the gaps. I was fortunate enough to be invited to fill that interim GM position and it has always been a rewarding experience.

That said, I was always glad to hand it off to the new GM once they arrived. My passion is turf management and there is no denying that. Each GM has been uniquely different and had their own ideas and direction they wanted to see the club go, but many of the policies and procedures for communication established over a decade ago are still functioning and in use.

The three general managers mentioned in the article were Mark Bado, MCM, Scott Brownfield, a PGA Professional, and myself. Mark left the club in 2008, but Scott and I are still working together. Mark remains one of my closest friends in life and a mentor to me. Chris Reis, CCM, is currently our GM. In the 2007 article, we discussed the implications of one of the team members leaving and how that could impact the management team. In general, each new GM has accepted the communication pathways and weekly meetings as part of their operational procedures.

We still have open lines of communication between departments. Weekly and daily meetings are still held among different department

heads just like they were established in 2007. The team still realizes that we all play a part in a member's or guest's experience at the club and each of the managers play a role in that experience. That commitment is even communicated to the line-level employee as established in the policy over a decade ago.

The 2007 article suggested that clubs needed to be dynamic in order to meet the needs of their members. Our club is no different and has made many changes in order to serve our members. The club today is much more family-oriented and kid-friendly. The youth programs in swimming, golf, tennis and summer kids camp are well attended and supported by the membership. In the last decade, we have seen many more family age members join the club, yet we still have older traditional club members to consider. That may be one of the biggest challenges we face as a club. How do we make the club exciting and more casual for our younger members while keeping the traditional members engaged?

We work hard at striking that balance every day the doors are open. The addition of a new "sports bar" themed area in the club has been a great success but we still offer a formal dining area for those who would like that experience. The dress codes have been loosened to provide a more casual environment. We have a "kid's zone" where mom and dad can drop the kids off and then go downstairs and have a nice relaxing dinner. We have a casual Friday evening cocktail party

on our front lawn circle every few weeks during the summer. Members can just drop by and socialize for an hour after work then get home to their families.

We strive to make the club an extension of our member's homes just as we did in 2007, always understanding that we need to be dynamic in nature and constantly think of new ways to engage and provide services for our membership. Townhall meetings are held a few times each year for the membership to have an open forum to communicate expectations and needs to the board of directors at the club. All this is done in order to build a club that serves all our members.

On the golf side, we still have men's league, ladies' day and our gentlemen's game (seniors), but new to the mix are a much more active junior program and a junior golf team. We even have a junior club championship that is played annually. We also have a ladies evening league for women who work but want to enjoy a round of golf and camaraderie with other professional women. Scott Brownfield and his staff do a fantastic job at promoting and developing these programs. The goal is to provide the activities and interactions that our members want and expect from the club and those expectations are different for every member.

We continue to host numerous golf outings and fundraisers during the season. These events are good sources of revenue and exposure for our club. We continually look for and discuss ways to improve our operations, in not

“ I know
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I can tell you it is
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you do.”

only golf, but club-wide. Everyone's input is valuable and appreciated, but more importantly, their input is respected.

As for me, I have seen many changes after 15 years at the club. Scott Brownfield and I have worked together for all 15 of those years. Have we always agreed with each other? Not always, but we have always respected each other for what we each bring to the table. I know superintendents don't always have the best relationships with their golf professionals, but I can tell you it is much easier when you do.

When we add Chris Reis, our new GM, into the fold, then we are an even better team. We have a commitment and trust in each other and share ideas and information.

It is undeniable that a team can accomplish far more than any one individual could accomplish on their own. So, even 11 years after the publication of that first article, it's more true than ever that integrated management is what “Plays in Peoria.” GCI

Andy Morris is the superintendent at Country Club of Peoria in Peoria Heights, Ill.

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LEADERSHIP at the HIGHEST LEVEL

Leasha Schwab describes the enduring lessons she learned from Bellerive Country Club's Carlos Arraya while volunteering at the PGA Championship.

I always enjoy looking back on past events that, at the time, you didn't know were going to have a hand in changing your life. The joy in knowing any little moment could be one of those life-changing moments can really give you a different view on each day.

The first time I met Belle-rive Country Club director of grounds and agronomy Carlos Arraya he was doing a talk at GIS on people and culture with Grant Murphy from The National Golf Club of Canada. Grant is one of my most valued mentors and I had to go watch and support his seminar. Plus, who doesn't need to know more about people and culture?

I was amazed. The seminar was inspiring, thoughtful and gave you tools to take home with you. I'm somebody who devours inspiration and I left that seminar just reeling with things to go back to my club and implement. I actually ordered their recommended books on Amazon while I was sitting in the seminar room. Books and podcasts have helped me improve who I am as a person and anything they were recommending had to be in my hands as soon as possible.

What did I take away from that day? Well, looking back on my first superintendent position at the young age of 20, I was impulsive, reactive and probably downright pushy at times. In my experience, I feel we lean toward these traits when we don't really know how to be impactful as a leader. When we feel like we are losing control of our staff – and they seem unmotivated and uninspired – are the times we need to reflect on ourselves.

All too commonly we look the opposite way at them, wondering how they should change. Truthfully, I still struggle with this and it is a work in progress, as everything should be. Over the past couple years, more steadily in the past year, I've finally felt like I was becoming more insightful and constructive in my leadership. It stems from surrounding myself with people who encourage me to work on myself – and Carlos is at the forefront.

A week volunteering for the 100th PGA Championship at Bellerive has inspired me more than any book or podcast. Which is saying a lot! Read Brene Brown's book "Braving the Wilderness" and you'll understand where I'm coming from. It's been one of those experiences that is so awakening you want to share it with the whole world but struggle to find any words that will do it justice. Well, I'm at least going to give it a shot here. When I think about the people at Bellerive, especially Carlos, these are some of the descriptions that come to mind:

- Poised
- Articulate
- Compassionate
- Authentic
- Forgiving
- Driven
- Curious
- Self-aware
- Responsive
- Daring
- Influential
- Connective
- Inclusive
- Humble

Carlos not only inspires people, he makes you want to be able to pass that inspiration along to the people in your own life. He wants each person on his staff to feel important, connected and wants others around you to get a chance to see your best qualities so we can all learn from each other.

As with many extraordinary people, it tends to be their journey in life that has awakened them to such perspective in life. Carlos is no exception. Losing his son two years ago, impacted his life more than most of us will ever be able to comprehend. It is amazing to witness somebody who has taken this life-altering event

and still finds a way to help others. Carlos has embraced not only his team during his journey, but the world. He has allowed Isaih's story to guide him and help him teach others perspective, love and compassion. I've never been in the presence of something more selfless and impactful.

Selfless. There's another word.

I watched Carlos balance hosting a PGA Championship while putting every person working or volunteering first. When you are in his presence, you realize this is not an act. This is real. The morning chants, fist pumps, huge smiles and love for one another is not an act. Throughout his genuine openness and leadership, Carlos has drawn his whole team into his circle of influence and positivity, sharing with them the secrets of our amazing industry. He's bridged the gap between professionalism and fun, between a leader and a friend, a mentor and an equal. Things most people struggle with he does with ease. He is unshakeable in his values.

I was lucky enough to be in the heart of these unshakeable values. I was sitting in Carlos's office when we learned that an extremely critical, inaccurate article was posted online. I remember the instant, physical, angry reaction I immediately felt. Reading it was even worse. Everybody was talking, reading quotes, giving their opinion, until we realized Carlos really hadn't said anything.

We all looked at him



Schwab

and he said, "Nobody do anything. Nobody react, comment, nothing. We know who we are, what we are about and what we will produce. That's all that matters. What

did we say team? We have a plan, we knew these things would happen. Stick to the plan." I was floored and truly a bit embarrassed at my lack of emotional self-control.

This industry needs Carlos. We need to ask him questions, we need to learn his secrets. Gone are the days that lack diversity, balance and inspiration. This man knows the importance of life and he wants everybody he crosses paths with to learn how to find it, too.

He wants you to be rich with experiences, connected with family, proud of your work, excited about your life. He wants to help you showcase your strengths and will work to help you assess and approach your faults in a positive, constructive way. In the early mornings at Bellerive, when the stars were still out, I am surprised our cheering and energy didn't wake all of St. Louis.

One line that stood out to me above everything was when Carlos was asked (in front of the entire grounds crew) if he has ever had people who worked for him not buy into his message or just not like him. This was his response, "Oh yeah! Definitely. But I choose to love them through it anyways every time."

I'm pretty sure we can all take a lesson from that. **GCI**

Leasha Schwab is the superintendent at Pheasant Run Golf Course in Sharon, Ontario.

“ I watched Carlos balance hosting a PGA Championship while putting every person working or volunteering first. I struggle to even comprehend that level of awareness and authenticity.”



SUSTAINABILITY

THAT'S GREEN TO A TEE

What can you learn from how Bandon Dunes preserves scenic coastal land? Ken Nice offers lessons applicable to any property.

At Bandon Dunes, we think about environmental sustainability every day. From the very beginning, our founder, Mike Keiser, made it his mission to preserve the natural glory and ruggedness of the land and to create a connection between nature and anyone who walks our fairways. So, it's easy to see why KemperSports' Green to a Tee program – which serves as the company's blueprint for sustainability across all of its properties – started here.

Green to a Tee, which has four levels of certification, encompasses environmental-



Nice

ly-focused initiatives within several core areas of our facility operations, including: golf course maintenance, habitat management, water conservation, energy usage, recycling, green vendor utilization, and staff education and training. Last year, more than 80 percent of KemperSports properties reached significant milestones in their Green to a Tee adoption – a new record for the program.

I was fortunate enough to work with Jim Seeley, the visionary behind Green to a Tee, in the program's early days and to help Bandon Dunes become the first KemperSports proper-

ty to achieve level four Green to a Tee status. Today, Bandon Dunes' environmental efforts include the preservation of the natural plant life (including silvery phacelia – the hallmark of our 13-hole par-3 course Bandon Preserve logo), extremely light fertilizer use, a recycling program for grass clippings, renewable energy through the addition of solar arrays, the conversion of a vacant shed into a bat habitat and more.

We also donate the net proceeds from play at Bandon Preserve to the Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, which focuses on innovative ecological initiatives that drive economic opportunity on the south coast of Oregon. And we have forged key partnerships, like becom-

ing a part of the Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary Program and becoming a Waste Wise Partner with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Along this sustainability journey, I've learned a few key lessons that can apply to any golf property hoping to improve its commitment to sustainability:

- The little things matter. The first phase of Green to a Tee focuses on implementing some foundational environmentally-friendly practices – from creating a good IPM program to minimizing the use of fertilizer to establishing no-mow areas. These “little” things have the power to make a big impact on the environment and, at our

property, also enhance the fast and firm conditions our guests want.

- Question every one of your inputs. Turf managers are a highly motivated group; they want to work hard and produce the best results. But sometimes that motivation leads to adding too much to the natural environment – like excessive fertilizers. Through implementing Green to a Tee, we've seen that there are so many areas where we can reduce inputs and make our operations as lean as possible without trading on quality.
- Slow and steady wins the race. You don't become a sustainable property overnight. That's why Green to a Tee is such an effective program – it helps properties move through the sustainability journey in a logical, impactful manner that's manageable for the team. While level one and two include simpler tactics that don't greatly impact the budget, levels three and four are more intensive and require a property to make capital investments. For example, part of Bandon Dunes' level four Green to a Tee certification, we moved to LED lights and looked at alternative power sources. Each phase builds on your foundation to make maximum impact.
- Sustainability has to become "business as usual." Your commitment to the environment can't be limited to an event on Earth Day. These programs can only succeed when sustainability becomes a

habit, a part of your day to day routine. At Bandon Dunes, our team takes a disciplined approach to our environmental practices and now they are simply how we do business for every single person on our staff.

- There's always something more you can do. Sustainability and how we practice it has evolved tremendously since I started in this industry more than 20 years ago. And it will continue to evolve. For example, a few years ago we didn't fully understand what pyrolysis was or how it could benefit our property. Today we're looking at it as a solution for eliminating noxious weeds and enriching the soil. As stewards of the land, we need to stay up-to-date on developments in environmental science and think about how they might make a positive impact on our property.

If you're looking to start a sustainability program or want to really boost a program you already have in place, there are so many resources available to help – from the great toolkits offered by the Golf Course Superintendent Association of America to the PGA of America's latest social responsibility report. The key is to just get started and keep going – even the smallest steps in your program can have a positive impact on your surroundings. **GCI**

Ken Nice is the director of agronomy at KemperSports-managed Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in Bandon, Ore.



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TURFHEADS TAKE OVER
CAREER



Luke McGhee, a former assistant superintendent, opened a lawn care franchise in late 2017.

FROM FAIRWAYS TO HOME LAWNS

Luke McGhee describes the fulfillment associated with a sudden career change.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WEED MAN

"Ain't it fun- n y how life changes." These simple words sung by Thomas Rhett remind me each day of how quickly your dreams and aspirations in life can change. Just about a year ago, I was writing an article for the Wisconsin GCSA's magazine, *The Grass Roots*, as an assistant golf course superintendent. Now here I am writing as the business owner of Weed Man Lawn Care Racine-Kenosha. I have always shared a passion for the outdoors and knew I wanted to be involved in some aspect of landscaping, but life has taken me to a variety of fields and to the one now that I am most proud of.

Originally, I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison in hopes of becoming a landscape architect. I loved the idea of potentially owning a landscape company where I could design residential landscapes and maybe even design some golf courses. I was sharing this passion with a co-worker and he mentioned to me that a relative of his was a golf course superintendent, and, if I was interested in golf, I should do some research. That night, I contacted Doug Soldat (professor and role model at University of Wisconsin-Madison) to set up a meeting about the major. I thought, "Finally, I have my life figured out and know what I want to do." After talking with Doug, I started my first internship at Erin Hills, where I grew an even stronger passion for the turf industry. My



McGhee

internships and course experience grew as I worked the following summer in Kohler at Blackwolf Run, Whistling Straits occasionally, and University Ridge while at school. After working on these top courses, I knew I wanted to be a part of something special and work at a high-end facility.

While attending school, I heard the rumors about Sand Valley and bothered Dr. Soldat quite frequently to see if he knew anything about the project. My biggest goal in the golf industry was to build a golf course, and at the time, construction was still in the initial phases. I started my career as a second assistant at the Wisconsin Club. I was blessed to have a job there, but my career again changed when Doug reached out and said he had toured Sand Valley and put in a good word for me with the superintendent, Rob Duhm. I quickly called Rob and set up an interview. Thanks to Doug, it was only a couple of weeks

later that I packed my bags and headed north to become an assistant superintendent at Sand Valley.

Helping build Sand Valley was, simply put, an incredibly rewarding experience. Each day you see progress and the potential of something becoming remarkable. Today, Sand Valley is just that – remarkable – and it continues to be one of the best golf destinations in the United States. While working at Sand Valley, I got engaged to my amazing wife, Katie, and we decided that it would make the most sense for me to move closer to where she lived and start our life together in Brookfield, where I became an assistant superintendent at Westmoor Country Club.

I checked building a golf course off my list of career goals, and I was once again blessed enough to have a great job and work for an amazing superintendent. But I wanted more. I wanted to be my own boss, I wanted more responsibility, I wanted to be a better leader. I prayed each night for the ability to open myself up to new opportunities, and spent

my evenings applying for different jobs. It was around then that I wrote in *The Grass Roots* about how I had always wanted to be a business owner.

That's when my life really changed. A week later, Terry Kurth, director of development for Weed Man USA, called me after reading my article and asked me, "How would you like to open a lawn care franchise in Racine and Kenosha?" My prayers were answered, and my life quickly began to change for the better. The next couple of weeks were spent juggling wedding planning with talking to friends and family and other franchise owners about Weed Man as I prepared to possibly change the course of my future. After speaking with several Weed Man owners, I found that they all shared similar traits: happiness, a great work-life balance, business success and endless opportunities for advancement – all things that I felt were fading out of my reach while working on the golf course.

The third week of November 2017 was supposed to be the happiest week of my life because I was going to be marrying Katie on the 18th. However, I knew I wouldn't be able to concentrate on my wedding week with a possible life-changing career switch looming. Together, with the help of family and friends, I signed on to become the franchise owner of Weed Man Racine-Kenosha on Nov. 14, 2017, just a few days before our wedding date.

After our wedding, it was go-time. Training in Canada at the Weed Man headquarters was scheduled for December, and I quickly had



▲ Turfgrass management skills honed on golf courses are helping Luke McGhee as he transitions into the lawn care business.

TURFHEADS TAKE OVER CAREER

a list of to-do items I needed to accomplish before I could get any staff and start operating my new business. There were (and continue to be) challenges, but that is something that drives me more and more. A superintendent at Sand Valley always said, "run your day, don't let your day run you," and that is a phrase I choose to live by and run my business by.

Thanks to my previous background in golf and the turf industry, I have had what I feel is a very successful rookie year. Skills that you learn on the golf course – attention to detail, general management, membership interaction, responsibility and time management – are

all pivotal pieces of operating a business, but I now get to do it for myself rather than a membership or golfer.

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about the golf course and how it has helped me get here. The last 11 months of owning a business reminds me of building a golf course because you can see the opportunities ahead and how great it can be. You make mistakes, things change, and you build on those lessons to make the business and the future of the company better. Each day is different, and I especially

love that.

I want to make it clear that I have nothing against the golf industry. In fact, I have the utmost respect for everyone involved in the industry and can't thank those who I worked with/for enough, because without you and my experience on the course, I would have never followed my dreams of being a business owner.

It is with great pleasure that I sit here and write this article, knowing that I may have the opportunity to help inspire those that are in same situation I was ... stuck and looking for more. **GCI**

Luke McGhee is owner of Weed Man Lawn Care Racine-Kenosha, Wis., and a former assistant golf course superintendent.



▲ Luke McGhee says he thinks about his golf course experiences every day.



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Travels with Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 41-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

BUNKER STEPS

The 2 inch by 12 inch CCA treated rough-cut side boards are fastened together to the 8 inch by 8 inch CCA treated beam steps using galvanized ¼-inch by 6-inch long lag screws. The steps are laid on top of the ground with a filter cloth underneath them. The very unique bottom step, which is almost flush with the top of the bunker sand, is also an 8 inch by 8 inch CCA treated rough cut beam. The weight of the beams, along with the side boards and the native soil with bermudagrass sod placed over it very solidly hold the steps in place for the long-term future. The cost of the materials and labor to install it was approximately \$1,500. Chris Bevers, director of grounds, and Shawn Cedorchuk, assistant superintendent, lead the team at the Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club in Miromar Lakes, Fla.



DROP SPREADER HOPPER EXTENSIONS:

This Gandy 12-foot wide Model 1012R Drop Spreader/Seeder (approximately \$6,500 new) holds approximately 18 cubic feet or 1,200 pounds of capacity. Wooden hopper extensions were added using ¼-inch thick plywood that is screwed together with lag screws. Both of the wooden covers are ¾-inch thick plywood with two hinges and two metal latches on each one for easy access. The extensions slide out easily when not in use. The hopper extensions more than double the storage capacity that is used for winter overseeding of the fairways at the Sea Trail Plantation's Jones, Byrd & Maples Courses in Sunset Beach, N.C. Jesse Ruston is the former superintendent and Rodney Mead is the current superintendent. The plywood was already in inventory and the hinges and latches cost less than \$40.



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LET'S TALK...



Pat Jones is editorial director of Golf Course Industry. He can be reached at pjones@gie.net or 216-393-0253.

Nine years ago, I took my last drink. It was cheap, warm vodka straight out of the bottle. I was alone and scared. I still remember the bitter, greasy burn it left behind.

The next morning, I started the journey of recovery I'm still on today. You can read about how I got sober in a column called "Catharsis" I wrote for our August 2010 issue. The short version is I got help and I quite literally ignored the urge to drink every hour of every day until sobriety became my new normal.

In the years that have passed since I wrote that piece, I've learned a lot about myself and about the disease of addiction. I've lost count of the number of people who've reached out to me with concerns about their use of alcohol or drugs. Some got sober and stayed sober to this day. Some did not.

The most common problem I see is people – people of all ages and all socioeconomic backgrounds – who self-medicate for depression and/or anxiety. I think that's what pushed me over the line from being a drinker to being a drunk. I started to use booze to suppress the "death spiral" feeling I'd get if things weren't going right.

Psychologists call this "catastrophizing" and it's common among people with clinical anxiety. You fixate on a problem and play it out in your mind

constantly. Those dark scenarios swirl in your head and pull you farther down. They often end with losing your job or your family or something equally awful.

Oftentimes it's the classic "everyone will discover I'm a fake and a fraud" nightmare that cuts to the very core of your self-image. So, you drink or use pills to help you dull the terror. And that makes it worse because now you're feeling incredible guilt and lying to people around you to cover up your use.

Superintendents have historically lived a workstyle that embraces stress, overwork, and frustration with both Mother Nature and the whims of employers who "don't get it." This creates a perfect breeding ground for catastrophizing. Too many folks in our community live with that gnawing fear that maybe their best isn't good enough and their boss doesn't understand, and it's only a matter of time before they get fired and everyone will see them as a failure. I know at least one superintendent who killed himself because of that fixation. I know many more who've turned to self-medication to try to deal with it.

Let's talk about that.

First, stress is stress. It's actually healthy in many cases because it forces us to do hard things and overcome challenges. Anxiety is a different thing. It has physical symptoms (pan-

ic attacks, sleeplessness, etc.). If anxiety is interfering with the quality of your life, go talk to someone. At the very least, try some coping strategies like mindfulness (which is basically tricking your brain into slowing down and not instantly freaking out when bad things happen), deep breathing or exercise. I do "power walks" four or five times a week as exercise. Here's a secret ... those walks help me manage my anxiety far more than the small dose of Lexipro I take every night.

Second, if you find yourself rationalizing your growing use of alcohol or drugs (Zanax, Prozac, Percocet, etc.) as a coping mechanism for that anxiety or depression, you should talk to someone. Make an appointment with an addiction counselor or do an online assessment. Also, there is zero shame in going to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and just listening. You have to be self-aware! Explore why you're worried about your use of booze or pills. Be honest with yourself.

Oh, and don't kid yourself that you can manage your drinking or drugging. Many people I speak with about this say they're going to "dial it back" and use less. This rarely works. Abstinence is still the only real cure for the disease of addiction.

(By the way, I'm addressing this to you, but it could just as easily be a problem you see with a family member, a co-worker or a member of your crew. You'd be shocked to learn how many functional opiate addicts are out there right now working laborer jobs.)

I hope you'll read every word of this issue and absorb what your peers are saying about mental health and the need to live a balanced life. But I also hope you'll be more aware of how addiction can creep into your life and deny you the happiness and wellness you deserve. You only get to take this journey once. It's way more fun when you're sober. **GCI**

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