FAZIO FOOTHILLS IS BARTON CREEK RESORT & SPA’S signature golf course. It’s a design masterpiece from Tom Fazio with dramatic cliff-lined fairways, natural limestone caves, waterfalls and superb TifEagle Bermuda greens, providing 18 holes of challenging pleasure.

The 7,125-yard, par-72 course demands long, accurate drives down the Hybrid TifSport Bermuda fairways. The 175-yard, par-3, ninth hole features a green adjacent to a natural waterfall that adds to the challenge and beauty of the course.

Additionally, all four courses at Barton Creek embody the Fazio trademark of protecting and preserving the environment and have achieved the Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary designation. Of the estimated 16,000 golf courses in the United States, only 2,300 are affiliated with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary program.

Ken Gorzycki, director of golf course management, and his team take great pride in their courses and work hard to maintain their natural beauty through a meticulous management program that cares for the environment through managing run off water and reusing it for irrigation as well as cultural and chemical pest controls.

Insignia fungicide plays a role in keeping these courses looking their best. As part of a fungicide rotation, Insignia’s broad spectrum of control helps keep the pristine greens and fairways from becoming susceptible to the patch diseases that normally attack bermudagrass.

To find out more about Insignia fungicide and its broad spectrum of disease control, contact your local distributor sales representative or BASF at www.turffacts.com
Shades Of Green

OPINION

The classic teamwork slogan, “There is no I in team,” sent the message that WE are all in this together, so quit slacking or showboating and get on the bus with US.

I do a lot of crosswords and word jumbles, so it didn’t take long for me to decipher the word “team” and plainly see that there was ME in team.

I’m not saying the message still isn’t valid, but the golf industry team at your club and in your state needs a new slogan and a new commitment to teamwork in order to address the multiple water, nutrient and pesticide issues.

“United We Stand” is my choice as the new rallying cry. I know it’s not really new. Patrick Henry said it long ago on the eve of the American Revolution. But there’s a U (you) and I in united. You and I need to get our act together to raise awareness on golf’s contributions environmentally and economically, and send clear and consistent messages to our politicians and regulators at all levels.

The problem is like any preventive treatment or practice on your course. You spend time, effort and money to prevent a problem that doesn’t exist YET! Most action groups that form do so out of a circle-the-wagons mentality to fight off a specific attack. I would make the argument that we are already under attack in the case of water restrictions and perceptions about nutrient and pesticide runoff and leaching. We need to unite and create white-paper statements about those issues, which make negative headlines about golf and turfgrass in general time after time.

A few states have made good inroads into uniting the allied associations of golf — Arizona and Georgia come to mind. Florida once created the Florida Golf Council over a taxation issue, but the council dissolved from apathy once the issue was reconciled. There’s nothing like a good fight or injustice to pull us together. Again, I remind you that the anti-golf groups, clueless media and pressured politicians have golf and turfgrass in the cross hairs and take shots at us every day.

The Georgia golf associations managed to unite and rally the troops during the recent drought in 2000 and bring some common sense to the water-restriction process. I read recently that, as the alliance followed up with a Water Conservation Best Management Practices survey to solidify its position and demonstrate stewardship, only 21 of more than 300 surveys had been filled out and returned. It is so easy to lose focus once the crisis has passed. I keep telling you we are being worn down by a lot of little skirmishes that divide and conquer our industry — water use or quality here, pesticide fear there.

The Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association has been flirting with the idea of getting together with the Club Managers Association of America, the golf course owners, the Florida Golf Association and the Professional Golf Association for a sit down and talk about how we can work together on the issues. Well, it’s time to ask these folks out on a date and see how it goes. The Golf Industry Show is a start on a broad national level, but local issues like “Save the Bay, Lake or River” will be taking pot shots at golf for fertilizer and pesticide runoff — real or imagined.

Coming soon from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will be Baseline Data Surveys to get a realistic fact-based handle on how we manage our golf courses. Don’t ignore these opportunities to document the real facts about golf. They won’t be long or tedious to complete. They will be confidential. Superintendents have the data. Owners, pros and general managers have the contacts. This will give us a way that you (U) and I can unite to help our industry.

Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.
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Re-Establishing the Virtues of Skill

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD

THERE IS AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF YOUNGER PLAYERS WHO HAVE NO CONCEPT WHAT REAL SKILL USED TO MEAN

Many golfers believe that skill means hitting down an imaginary center line, striking the ball as high and long as possible while avoiding land mines along the way. But anyone who played golf prior to the recent equipment boom knows there is so much more to skill than that.

Shackelford can be reached at geoffshac@aol.com.
Our home is always welcome to unique visitors. In fact, in January alone, we had 12,040* of them.

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*Source: WebTrends, January 2005
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Fifteen years ago salaries didn’t measure up. Today they aren’t quite the bane of superintendents.

WITH A BIGGER paycheck than ego, Matt Shaffer isn’t worried about becoming the Bill Gates of superintendents. He’s far more concerned about improving the financial standing of his lesser-paid peers.

“I think I’m top-10 percent now,” Shaffer says of his monetary rank as the director of golf operations at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa. “But I always said that once I made it, I wasn’t going to forget where I came from because there was a time I could barely eke out a living.”

That time was 33 years and a few tax brackets ago. Now 53, Shaffer can smile while reminiscing about his entry-level salary of $9,000 and the one-bedroom floor of a two-story house that came with it. Better yet, he can sleep easier these days, knowing that superintendent paychecks are no longer stuck in the era of buffalo nickels.

In 2005 the average base salary for a superintendent rose to $68,914, according to the Golf Course Superintendents...
Association of America (GCSAA). The figure represents a 9.3 percent jump from 2003 and a 29.5 percent jump over seven years.

"It's not at all unusual now for superintendents to be making six figures," GCSAA CEO Steve Mona says. "I saw a job posting the other day where the salary was between $145,000 and $165,000. Those used to be rarities 10 years or so ago. They're not now.”

In turn, many superintendents seem content. A Golfdom survey indicates that 71 percent of superintendents are "OK" with their salaries. Another 17 percent claim they "make great money" while 11 percent believe "the pay stinks."

"In the role that I fit in," Mona says, "if 88 percent of our members are saying, 'Yeah, I think I'm OK to well compensated,' I'm happy with that.”

Yet there is room for improvement. Many of the hardest-working superintendents are among the least compensated, Shaffer says.

Given the choice, they're the modest individuals who would sooner spend $2,000 on fertilizer than on a road trip to the national conference. Meanwhile, to Shaffer's chagrin, other employees at the same courses are making notably more money despite playing less integral roles.

"Superintendents today are obviously better educated, and I think we are equal to or better than any other person on the property," he says. "I think we ought to be compensated accordingly, but I don't necessarily think that's the case.”

Golfdom's readers reflect Shaffer's sentiment. Although not necessarily unhappy with what they earn, 32 percent claim that "more pay" would be the one thing about their job that they would change, ahead of catering to more knowledgeable golfers (30 percent), experiencing less pressure (18 percent) and shorter working hours (18 percent).

Turn the wage
Disdain over compensation used to be more intense. In 1993 superintendents earned an average of $45,000 per year. Humbling in itself, that figure was just a symptom of an overall image problem that was stunting the profession. While golf pros and club managers were basking in the sport's popularity, superintendents were facing sub-par compensation, fragile job security and fewer job opportunities.

The GCSAA, with Mona at the helm as of November 1993, started to focus on improving the reputation of its membership. Immediately, superintendents were told to mimic the best-dressed person on the property, whether it was a fellow employee or even a member. So be it if that meant donning a coat and tie.

"I think that's pretty much what's expected now," Mona says.

Continued on page 30
Happy With Your Pay?

Average Base Salary | All Superintendents

- $70,000
- $65,000
- $60,000
- $55,000
- $50,000
- $45,000
- $40,000

SOURCE: GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Club Manager Salaries By Title | 2003-2005

- $160,000
- $140,000
- $120,000
- $100,000
- $80,000
- $60,000
- $40,000
- $20,000
- $0

SOURCE: CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Continued from page 29

Of course, looking like a person of influence and actually being influential are two different matters. In addition to dressing the part, superintendents were asked by the GCSAA to start taking ownership of the entire facility instead of just the golf course. “Our members can’t take that approach any more,” Mona says. “And they don’t.”

Ironically, as the new millennium approached, superintendents finally began to dispel their flawed reputations because of a newfound emphasis on their bread and butter — the golf course. Between 1996 and 2002, the No. 1 determinant as to why golfers chose a particular course changed from cost to course conditioning, according to surveys conducted by the GCSAA and National Golf Federation. An ensuing Golf Digest poll of core golfers indicated that the top two drivers of satisfaction were greens/bunkers and tees/fairways, respectively.

“The golfers have put the role of the superintendent at a pretty high posi-

tion,” GCSAA Director of Communications Jeff Bollig says.

Employers, recognizing more than ever that the condition of the golf course is their “No. 1 weapon,” Mona says, have reciprocated. The median salary for superintendents at 18-hole facilities with a budget of at least $1 million is $100,000, according to the GCSAA. At least 10 percent of all certified superintendents with a minimum education of a bachelor’s degree are making $125,000 or more.

In effect, salary is no longer a major concern. Job security and unrealistic player expectations of the course have moved to the forefront of superintendent worries, Mona says. These days, GCSAA members are just as prone to complain about issues involving labor and environment as they are about compensation.

“For a lot of years, (salary) was Job One,” Mona says. “It’s still extremely important. I don’t want you to get the idea we’re coasting at all, because we’re not. But those are not the kind of conversations we’re having today.”

Supers vs. pros and managers
How much salary is enough? At one time the rule of thumb was that the total amount should represent 10 percent of the annual budget. But there are fallacies to that thinking, Shaffer says. “I’m not sure a guy with a $3 million budget is making $300,000. And the guy who has a $500,000 budget, I’m not sure he’s making $50,000,” he says.

Less practical still is trying to determine one’s worth based on actual hours worked. That’s a no-win situation, according to Mona, in light of the long days and weeks that many superintendents record, especially during peak season.

“If you get into the game of trying to calculate your average hourly wage, you probably won’t be too happy with that,” Mona says. “But if you look at it in a broader sense — as a year rather than 365 eight-hour days — I think you can have a little different attitude. ... And all