

SOUTH FLORIDA GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION HISTORY

Jimmy Blackledge

It All Started In April, 1939

During the winter of 1938-39, Joe Ryan, Superintendent of Rolling Green Golf Club in Media, Pennsylvania and then President of the National Association, was visiting his daughter in Miami. Elwood Poore, the assistant Pro at Indian Creek Country Club, was the assistant Pro at Joe's Club in the summer and a mutual friend. For this reason, Joe spent some time with Elwood and me at Indian Creek. Joe urged me to consider the idea of organizing a local Golf Course Superintendents Association in South Florida, and we discussed this with Mark Mahannah, Superintendent of Miami Biltmore Country Club, and Mike Schuyler, Superintendent of Miami Beach Golf Club.

As a result of these discussions, we held an informal meeting at the Indian Creek Country Club on April 22nd, 1939 to formulate plans for such an organization. Attending this meeting were: R. F. Lawrence, Boca Raton Hotel & Country Club; C. C. Kelly, Florida East Coast Hotel Company; Mark Mahannah, Miami Biltmore Country Club; Stanley Kendust, Miami Shores Country Club; Fred Hoerger, La Gorce and Bayshore Golf Clubs; Hans Schmeisser, Hollywood Country Club; and myself.

This group decided to call an organizational meeting for Saturday, May 13th, 1939 at the Hollywood Country Club. Hans Schmeisser and I drafted and co-signed a letter inviting all the known Golf Course Superintendents in the area to this meeting. Through the courtesy of Mr. Oscar Johnson, then General Manager of the Hollywood Beach Hotel Properties, this letter was mimeographed and mailed on May 6th, 1939.

We failed to record the names of those attending the Hollywood Country Club meeting, however, the following officers were selected: Jimmie Blackledge, President; Clyde Smith (Gulfstream Club), Vice-President; and Mike Schuyler, Secretary-Treasurer. A committee was appointed to draft proposed by-laws for the

organization, and annual dues of \$5 were agreed upon.

On June 12th, 1939, the organization got underway at the Miami Country Club with Bill Barton as host. At this meeting, the by-laws were presented and approved with some minor changes, and Mr. C. C. Shaw of Hector Supply Company was made an Honorary Member in recognition of his help in getting the word around to the Superintendents in the area. Attending this meeting were: Clyde Smith, Mike Schuyler, R. F. Lawrence, B. A. Yoder, Art Gleason, Bill Barton, Ward Wood, Norman Summers, Walter Weeks, Mark Mahannah, Stanley Kendust, C. C. Shaw, and myself.

On July 10th, 1939, we met at the Orange Brook Golf Club with Harry Moore as host. At this meeting, three Directors were elected to serve on the Board of Directors with the three officers. These Directors were: R. F. Lawrence, B. A. Yoder, and Mark Mahannah.

The new Association continued to have regular meetings each month at clubs from Miami to Palm Beach, picking up a few new members. The format of the meetings varied somewhat, but generally the business meeting was followed by a "round table" discussion and then lunch and golf.

At the meeting on December 11th, 1939 at the Palm Beach Country Club with Ward Wood as host the idea of extending the scope of the Association to a state wide organization was discussed. Details of how this might be accomplished was a matter of considerable concern at several subsequent meetings. The objectives of this effort were to spread the benefits we felt such an organization could provide, to others in the field of golf course maintenance and to develop sufficient numerical strength to influence the establishment of some badly needed research in Turf at the University of Florida Experiment Station System which at that time was heavily, farm oriented.

In February 1940 a letter was sent to all the known Golf Clubs in the state with the proposal that a meeting be held in Orlando sometime in June

for the purpose of establishing a state wide Golf Course Superintendents Association. The response to this letter was too meager to justify continuing the plans.

At our meeting of April 22nd, 1940 at Indian Creek Country Club with Jimmie Blackledge as host, the failure of this approach was discussed and it was decided to have a few of our members visit the Tampa and Orlando areas, contacting Superintendents to promote the state organization concept. Mr. Yoder, Bill Barton and C. C. Shaw were selected to make this trip.

There was also some discussion about the possibility of our organization becoming affiliated with the Florida State Florist's Association. This organization had become a forum for all ornamental horticultural interests in the state. It consisted of the Florists, Nurserymen, Fern Growers, Bulb Growers, and Gardners Associations, each group retaining their identity with separate business and educational sessions, but with combined social activities and legislative efforts. We met at the Orange Brook Golf Club on May 20th with Harry Moore as host. At this meeting I was authorized to make application for affiliation with the Florida State Florist's Association at their annual meeting being held in Gainesville the following week. This was accomplished successfully and reported at our meeting of June 17th, 1940 at the West Palm Beach Golf & Country Club with Clyde Usina, Sr. as host. At this meeting C. C. Shaw reported that he had found little interest in organization in the Orlando area, however, there was some interest in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area in establishing a local organization such as ours. It was decided to invite those interested to our meeting at Miami Shores Country Club on July 8th to be of any assistance possible in the establishment of such an association.

Election of officers was held at our meeting of July 8th, 1940 at the Miami Shores Country Club with Stanley Kendust as host. Elected were:

(Continued on Page 18)

(Continued from Page 12)

Jimmie Blackledge, President, B. A. Yoder, Vice-President, Mark Mahannah, Secretary-Treasurer. Gus Thomas of St. Petersburg attended this meeting and reported that a number of Clubs in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area had indicated interest in forming a West Coast Association and progress was being made in this direction.

Our Association continued to hold meetings each month with nothing spectacular happening. We had trouble getting a quorum in attendance particularly at some of the winter meetings, however, we still managed to have informal discussions of our mutual problems.

On May 12th, 1941 we held our first annual tournament at the Miami Country Club with Bill Barton as host. C. C. Shaw and R. F. Lawrence won top honors and Ward Wood carried off the prize for high gross. A short business meeting followed the tournament and then fourteen of our members and their wives enjoyed a Dinner Dance in the Club Ballroom. Everybody had a "ball" and all agreed that this should be an annual affair.

Later in the month of May about ten of our members went to Jacksonville to attend the first meeting with the Florida State Florist's Association. Attendance at this meeting from other parts of the state was limited to Pat Deavy and Charley Zaun of the Jacksonville area.

On July 14th, 1941 our regular meeting and election of officers was held at the Miami Shores Country Club with Stanley Kendust as host. Elected were: Jimmie Blackledge, President, Mike Schuyler, Vice-President, Mark Mahannah, Secretary-Treasurer, B. A. Yoder and R. F. Lawrence, Directors. Luther Voltz, Golf Editor for the Miami Herald attended this meeting giving us a start on establishing some publicity.

At our meeting on October 13th, 1941 at the Gulfstream Club, Frank Swanson of the Florida East Coast Hotel Company made a rather elaborate presentation to the President of a "Trouble Club Gavel" - this gavel was designed and contributed to the Association by Red Lawrence of the Boca Raton Hotel & Country Club.

For the rest of 1941 and into early 1942 our meetings continued with somewhat better attendance and during the winter months we had a number of out of state visitors at these meetings. There was a growing concern

expressed about the effect of the war in Europe on our activities and the future of the Association.

On May 11th, 1942 we had a re-run of our annual Tournament and Dinner Dance at the Miami Country Club. However, we were on an economy kick and no prizes were purchased for the Tournament and a "juke box" was used for the Dinner Dance instead of an orchestra. In spite of this everyone seemed to have a big time.

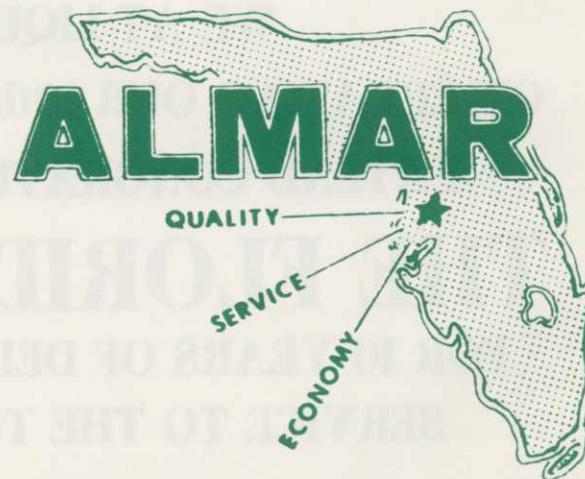
On May 17, 18 and 19, 1942 a number of our members attended our second meeting with the Florida State Florist's Association in Orlando. At this meeting Dr. O. J. Noer conducted a short course on soils and soil management. Three men from the Corps of Engineers attended this meeting—Ed Cale, Norman Johnson and Jack Bellows. At the combined meeting of the Florida State Florist's Association the decision was made to suspend further meetings for the duration of the War.

At our meeting on July 27th, 1942 at the Fort Lauderdale Country Club with Walter Weeks as host it was announced that our Secretary-Treasurer, Mark Mahannah, was leaving the Miami Biltmore Country Club to work with the Army Engineers as Supervisor of Grounds Maintenance for the Air Force installations in the St. Peters-

burg area and that I was leaving the Indian Creek Country Club to become part of the Erosion Control Section for the Army Engineers at the Fourth Service Command Headquarters in Atlanta. It was decided to elect new officers with the understanding that they would serve for the "duration". Elected were: R. F. Lawrence, President, B. A. Yoder, Vice-President, Mike Schuyler, Secretary-Treasurer, and Harry Moore and Ward Wood, Directors.

Under Red Lawrence's guidance the Association held together very well thru the War years. Meetings were not held on a regular monthly schedule but several meetings were held each year and those members still on the golf courses in the area were able to get together and discuss their mutual problems so the Association survived.

In July 1945, a meeting was held at the Orange Brook Golf Club with Harry Moore as host—new officers were elected and dues were re-instated. Elected were: Fred Heoger, President, Harry Moore, Vice-President, and Walter Weeks, Secretary-Treasurer. From this point on the Association has made a steady growth over the years with many changes in the structure of the organization and the membership.



CHEMICAL CO., INC.

P.O. BOX 18101

TAMPA, FLA. 33679

CALL COLLECT 813-839-3363