

# "COLOR IT GREEN"

## The Florida Green and the Green Sheet

By: Mike Bailey and Irene Jones

The Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association is one of the strongest chapters within the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Our voting strength and professionalism is widespread, covering a wide expanse of land from Jacksonville to the Keys and back to panhandle. Every year our association becomes more unified as we receive more benefits from the work performed by the FGCSA Board and the respective committee members. Since the topic for this issue of The Florida Green is: What Do You Receive From The FGCSA, several thoughts have quickly come to mind on the subject. A hard working President along with an excellent Board and Committees was my first thought. The current administration is completely devoted to upgrading the professionalism of our industry. Second I thought of the benefits received from The Florida Green, a trade journal created by golf course superintendents for golf course superintendents, and after discussing this topic with the Editor, Dan Jones, I felt it would be very appropriate to elaborate on the trade journals of the FGCSA: The Florida Green and The Green Sheet.

This article will review and explain the general purposes concerned with each journal, it will explain the format, content and the benefits that each one has to offer to FGCSA members. First lets begin by going back in history to review the formation of The Florida Green. Originally the publication was named The South Florida Green. The very first issue was published in October 1973. The six page newsletter type magazine was predominately circulated throughout the South Florida Chapter. Dan Jones took over as Editor in July of 1976. By this time the magazine had grown to sixteen pages. It was still an all black and white issue, except for the color photograph on the cover. Advertising support was loyal back then and has continued to remain so even up to the present time. For example it is interesting to note that out of the 10 original advertisers 9 are still supporting the magazine, and in fact are represented in this issue. In July of 1980, the transition was made for the publication to become a statewide trade journal and the name The Florida Green was decided on.

Since then The Florida Green has become a phenomenal success story for the FGCSA. The present 64 page magazine is more than just a newsletter. Advertisers find themselves reaching out to the entire golfing industry. A mailing list is always being updated to send (3) copies to each golf course throughout the state. The intent and purpose of sending those three copies is to reach (1) the Golf Course Superintendent, (2) the Golf Professional and place the magazine in the pro shop, and (3) the President, General Manager, Greens Committee Chairman, or Owner of the operation and to place the magazine in the executive offices. The intent is to reach out to the other decision making facets of our industry and create a vital link that will serve to upgrade the image of the Golf Course Superintendent/Manager in Florida.

Looking back over the years we can see that The Florida

Green has received many awards within our industry. The GCSAA has noted the Florida Green as being the best overall newsletter and the best cover photograph by the panel of GCSAA Newsletter judges for fourteen awards in various categories. The magazine has also been the recipient of the prestigious Harry Eckhoff Award for excellence, placing first in 1984 and 1985.

Dan attributes this unique success of the magazine to the Superintendent writers and points to the fact that the publication speaks the language of the Superintendent. He finds that advertisers in our industry support the magazine better than one would imagine because they have the ability to reach the desk of nearly every golf course superintendent throughout the state. The quality of the articles and the excellent use of color in The Florida Green parallel that of the nationally operated commercial trade journals. These facts coupled with interesting, informative and educational topics written by golf course superintendents and fellow writers within our industry have caused many to comment that The Florida Green is unmatched by any other journal within the chapters of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The Florida Golf Superintendents Association has been expanding and becoming more unified on a statewide basis within the past few years. This expansion has created a very large volume of information which should be dispensed by a current newspaper type publication. So at one point, two years ago, FGCSA President Tom Burrows was contemplating the idea of forming an FGCSA Newsletter that would be totally unlike The Florida Green. This newsletter would be similar to a newspaper in reporting current industry news for our state association and so it would be totally unlike the Florida Green. Having been a little familiar with the job of putting a magazine together (after having watched Dan Jones and Dave Bailey work together for several years on The Florida Green) Mike Bailey was prime bait for Tom to ask to head up this newsletter. Mike commented that the more he thought about this the more he agreed, there really was merit for creating a spin off to the Florida Green. Mike sees the Florida Green as something more like a book, a type of publication tht one will tend to read and then perhaps collect in volume and keep on the bookshelf for years to come. He sees the newsletter however as totally different, as being more similar to a newspaper. Something with current, up-to-date news items that you will read, perhaps keep until the next issue comes out, then you will probably throw it away much like your daily paper.

It has been said a newsletter should be short and to the point. Eight pages is considered to be ideal. Something eye catching, like 'green' colored paper could be appropriate. A limited number of advertisers is recommended for this type of publication, this takes the financial burden away from the FGCSA. Bi-monthly is an ideal time frame to be able to collect enough information to be newsworthy and still current. A newspaper type publica-



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tio can be printed in far less time when compared to a magazine type publication. A two week printing deadline date could be accommodated for a newsletter. Since the name Florida Green was so excellently well titled, a spin off name would be very appropriate. A newsletter is often regarded as a news 'sheet' so when a former newsletter editor himself, Mr. Scott Muzuski suggested the title 'The Green Sheet' VIOLA! We now have two uniquely different trade publications for The Florida Golf Course Superintendents Associations: The Florida Green to cover more educational journal type materials and The Green Sheet to cover newsy type items that will generally be regarded as history by the time the next issue comes out.

The Green Sheet has a mailing list of 1,500 and is in comparison much smaller in context but very time consuming per individual page. An average of 30 articles encompasses 8 pages of print. Articles are collected two weeks before the upcoming issue of the bi-monthly newsletter. These articles are taken to the printer to be typeset into columns. This material then has to be proofread, then the contents has to be pieced together, so that the many articles will flow into a pattern that will fit into each page. This process is best described as being much like putting a jigsaw puzzle together. After the 'work dummie' has been finalized, the printer then begins to image reproduce the pages and then the actual printing of The Green Sheet is accomplished. The issues are then mailed out to all members of The FGCSA, some media, GCSAA Newsletter Editors, IFAS staff and others related to the turf industry. (The Florida Green is also mailed out to key persons in our industry).

The format, printing process, deadline dates, cost of publishing, the type of reader to be reached and virtually every other concept about the two publications are uniquely different when compared to each other. The Florida Green, a quarterly magazine requires a three month deadline date before each issue. The volume of printing work to be done is far more time consuming, the articles are longer, advertising must be coordinated with a number of different agencies, and articles must be collected from various sources throughout the state. When all the material to be printed is gathered then it must be sent to the printer to be processed. It is returned to our office and proofread for the first time. Next it is 'pasted up' into what could be described as a 'homemade magazine'. Every ad, every article, in fact everything that will make up the finished copy is pasted and fit all together. Next it is returned to the printer for the process called the 'blue line' copy. The printer makes a 'dummie' copy without any color, but with all the ads and type, exactly as it will come out in the final copy. We must once again check and proofread this copy. After any corrections or duplications are checked over, then we mail it back for the final printing. After the printing process, there is the binding, the stuffing into envelopes, the labeling of addresses, sorting of the magazine into zip code order, bundling up into mailbags and finally delivery to the postoffice, all before it arrives (sometimes a little late) on your desk. Currently The Florida Green is direct mailing 2,500 copies. When the issue comes out then another process starts because then it is time for billing the advertisers and collecting the receipts. Posting payments and banking, as all bills associated with our printing costs must be paid.

Correspondence with advertisers continues on a daily basis both written and by telephone. Books are kept and balanced on a monthly basis and accountings are done for the FGCSA on a quarterly basis. A yearly financial accounting is done by the FGCSA's Certified Public Accountant, David Claude. So you can see we are kept busy around the Florida Green Office which also happens to be our living room and dining room, as well as half of the garage. Right now it is exactly 10:20 P.M. and I'm still working on this article in order to get it to the printer on time. It seems like when you are publishing a magazine, deadlines are your biggest challenge or nightmare however you happen to look at it.

Advertising support for The Green Sheet has been strong since its inception. Presently, one individual company proposed to cover the operating budget for a one year term which consists of 6 issues. The FGCSA Board approved this concept because of the financial stability. We believe advertising response will become even more favorable in future years, but strongly hold to the original idea than an 8 page newsletter should remain as the dominant factor. Advertising can be kept to a minimum thus creating an intense newsletter now not only for the association, but for the advertisers as well.

In review, The Florida Green and The Green Sheet harmoniously co-exist for the purpose of giving The FGCSA members, and others who contribute to our industry, information on a formal, educational basis, along with a quick, informative newsy type basis also. The Editors, Dan Jones and Mike Bailey are always open to new ideas and thoughts for the future. We take pride in helping to serve the Florida Golf Course Superintendent/Manager and look forward to many more successful years. ■

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