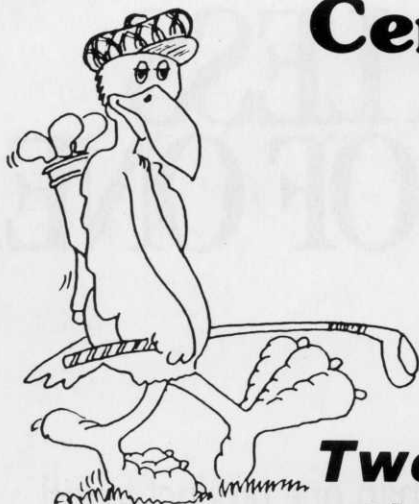


Central Florida Crowfoots



By: Joel D. Jackson
Lake Buena Vista Club

Two Members Talk About the FGCSA and GCSAA

The following is an interview with Joe Ondo, President of the Central Florida Chapter, and Superintendent of the Winter Pines Golf Club in Winter Park.

J.J.: Joe, as you know, the topic we're discussing today is "What do we get from the FGCSA and GCSAA, and what do we want?" I'd like to ask some general questions to get us started and then we'll just free-lance from there, okay?

Joe: No problem.

J.J.: Joe, how long have you been involved with the FGCSA and the GCSAA?

Joe: I've been a member of the FGCSA for about 6½ years, and I joined the GCSAA about a year later.

J.J.: Why did you join these organizations?

Joe: Well, after investing the time to attend and graduate from the Golf Operation Program at Lake City Community College, I felt that these were appropriate organizations for my chosen field, and that I would benefit from their publications, seminars, and trade shows.

J.J.: Okay, so you're a member! What do you ACTUALLY GET from belonging to these associations? First, the FGCSA.

Joe: Well, the FGCSA, working closely with the Florida Turfgrass Association, has continually funded and lobbied for turf research. I feel that the information that has come from those efforts has helped me do my job better. I also like the Florida Golf Day concept, and I'm glad that the role of the superintendent is being highlighted by such activities. With the advent of the GREEN SHEET this past year I am being kept informed of what other chapters are doing, and I'm being informed of current laws and restrictions around the state.

J.J.: What about the FLORIDA GREEN?

Joe: Well, other than being just about the best profes-

sional or trade publication, what can I say? I think we're all proud of this excellent publication. Obviously, it's another resource of learning and information for us to use to stay on top of our profession.

J.J.: Now' let's talk about the GCSAA. I know you're an avid golfer so the national golf privileges must mean something to you!

Joe: Definitely. And I think some of my most enjoyable experiences have been representing Florida in the GCSAA national tournaments. I've made friends from across the country. It's really been great.

J.J.: Okay, pro, we know you can play the game! What do you get from the working man's side of the coin?

Joe: Well, I like the feeling of unity. I mean all across the United States there are literally thousands of golf course superintendents, professionals doing basically the same job. I feel the publications from the National give me a broad view of the industry, and at least I have an appreciation for what's going on across the country.

J.J.: Joe, I attended three FGCSA board meetings last year so I have a small understanding of what goes on at the state level. You have attended many yourself as past and present External Vice President of our chapter. Joe, what do you want the FGCSA to do for its members?

Joe: I think this past year has been a giant step in the right direction. I think the FGCSA is just now maturing as an effective organization and is just beginning to tap its potential for serving its members. The hiring of an executive secretary was an excellent idea and really a necessity for conducting business effectively.

J.J.: I quite agree, but what REAL THINGS can the State do for you and me?

Joe: I think that the State Association should insure that we have the latest information regarding en-

vironmental laws and regulations that will affect how we get our jobs done. I think the job referral program will gain in stature with proper management, and I would expect to continue to receive the most current news on what's going on statewide.

J.J.: I think those are reasonable goals. What about the GCSAA?

Joe: Obviously, the National provides the big picture. I think many of us have felt that southern turf problems haven't received the emphasis that they should considering the number of golf courses involved. Hopefully, that trend is diminishing.

J.J.: What about the recent "Superintendent TV Commercial?"

Joe: Well, yes, the public relations program is gaining momentum. I hope it's not just an ego trip! It does make me feel good about my profession, and it did get a lot of positive response. I think it should be carefully managed and restricted to special events.

J.J.: I agree pretty much with your assessments of the FGCSA and GCSAA, and I would like to add these comments concerning membership and benefits of these organizations. Those of us who are active in these organizations GET MORE from them because we DO PARTICIPATE. We attend meetings and conferences.

I came across two articles in the December issue of the GCSAA's GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT that contained quotes that I feel sum up my feelings about why I belong to the FGCSA and GCSAA and what I get from them. First, from the article about Patty Berg, this year's "Old Tom Morris Award" recipient, "... That's one thing I like so much about the golf course superintendents, they stick together. They meet frequently, they listen to each others' problems, they try to find solutions..." and now from the article about Jack Martin, the superintendent at Shackamaxon G.C. in New Jersey came this quote, "... keep current. Go to every seminar, meeting, and convention you can possibly attend. There's never been a meeting I've gone to where I haven't learned to do something better..."

I feel sorry for the guys who don't participate more either by just attending more meetings or by serving as an officer or director. They miss some really good times, gratifying times, relaxing times that help make our profession a little more enjoyable.

Joe: I know. It always seems to be the same ten to fifteen people who end up conducting the business of the chapter. We ALL need to share the responsibility of running our organizations.

J.J.: Amen! Joe, thanks for sharing your views and comments with us!

Joe: My pleasure! See you at the next meeting. ■

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