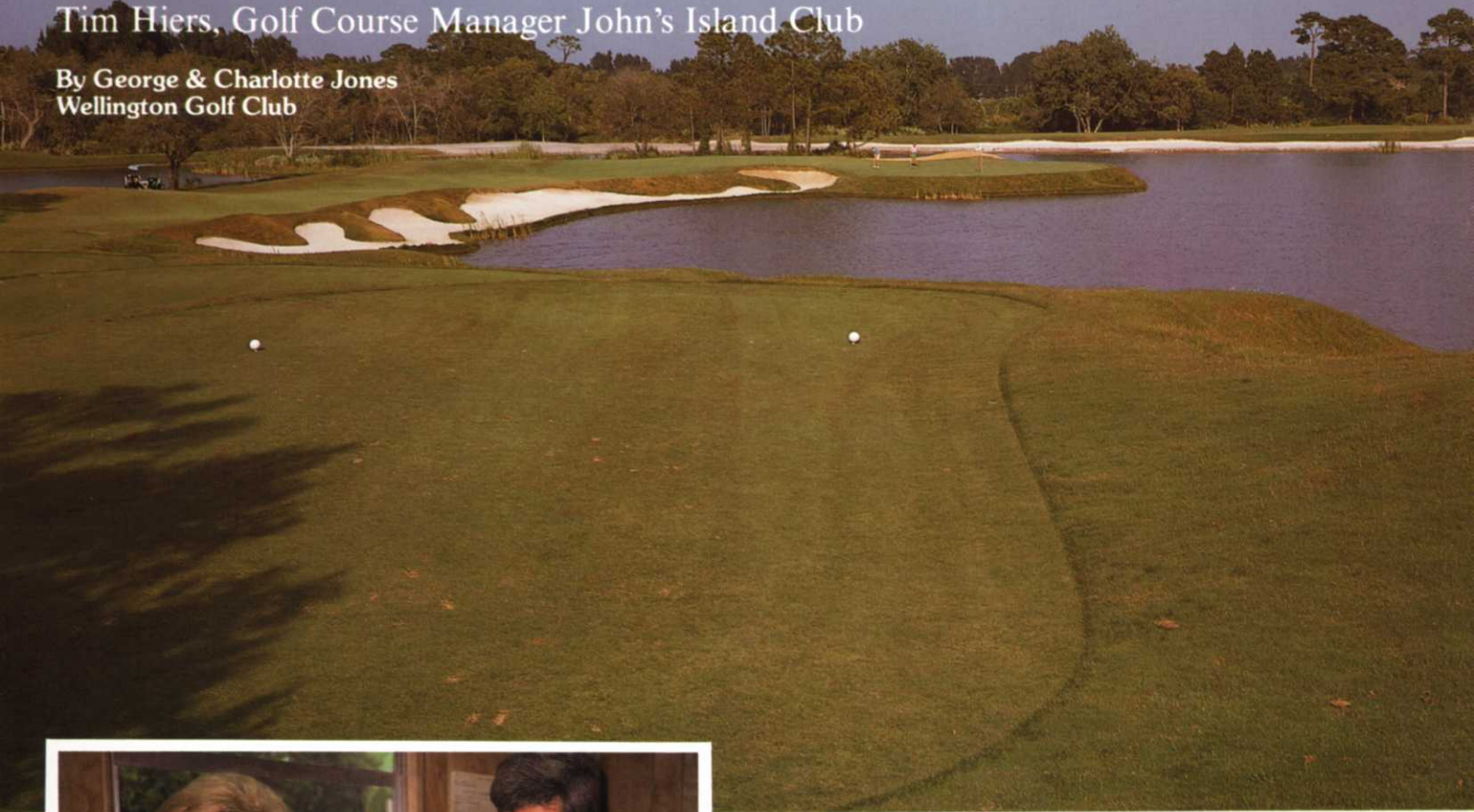


# BEHIND THE GREENS

Tim Hiers, Golf Course Manager John's Island Club

By George & Charlotte Jones  
Wellington Golf Club



*Charlotte Jones pauses while writing an article as Tim talks to Dan Jones to decide which of his profiles would be best for a picture.*



*L. to R. Greg Kelly - Pro West, Trevor Wright - General Manager, Al Batog - Project Manager for construction of golf course, Tim Hiers - Golf Course Manager, Bud Morrison - Greens Committee Chairman.*

**A**FTER talking with Tim Hiers for a while you can tell there is no other place he would rather be than at John's Island Club. As he completes his third year he says, "I feel lucky! The attitude of the membership and management is that they want to do things the best they can and give 100% cooperation and make it easy to do the job."

The image one perceives of Tim is that he could have been a prominent attorney or an executive of a large corporation such as I.B.M. He treats his job with the same professionalism, respect, and attention to detail.

Let's back up and start at Tim's beginning. He was born in Macon, Georgia. The family moved to New Smyrna Beach, Florida in 1960. His father was a Junior High School Coach and encouraged Tim's interest in the game of golf. In High School, he played on the golf team and became good enough to become a scratch golfer. With high hopes of becoming a pro, he went to Daytona Community College on a two year scholarship majoring in business. After the two years at Daytona he realized he was not quite good enough to play on the University of Georgia golf team and become a pro. So, he opted to go to Lake City Community College and stay with his love of golf by learning to be a golf course superintendent. A choice he has never regretted.

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Tim discusses operation of Golf Course with General Manager Trevor Wright.

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Tim graduated from Lake City in 1976, and became superintendent at Sun Tree Golf Course in Melbourne, Florida, September 13, 1976 at 22 years of age. During his five years at Sun Tree he hosted the Crowfoot Open twice and gained much experience. Tim enjoyed his job and was active in many organizations and at one particular time was President of the State Association, Vice President of the Central Florida Chapter, Chairman of the Crowfoot open, Chairman of the Florida Turf Grass Scholarship and Research Golf Tournament, on the Board of Directors for the Florida Turf Grass Association and belonged to the Optimist Club. Tim stated: "Being single I was able to spend a lot of time in association activities."

In July 1981 he joined the staff at Quail Ridge Country Club and was there for about four years. He became very busy improving and making changes in their two golf courses. Tim married Angie two months after he joined Quail Ridge. Just before leaving to go to John's Island their Daughter Ashley was born on March 3, 1985 and weighed almost ten pounds. Now they were a family of three.

Their move to Vero Beach brought them closer to their families. Tim states, "We love living here. There is no other place we would rather be. The school system is excellent. Although the community is growing, regulations are fairly strict. It's a little bit of what Florida used to be like." Another influence on his accepting the position was John's Island Club's plan to build a new golf course.

Tim's hobby as all his friends know, is trains. His love for trains started as a baby in Georgia. His family lived near a train depot and his father would take him to watch them. Many hours were spent this way and the fascination stayed with him. The tradition is being passed on to his daughter Ashley as he takes her

to watch the trains. On one occasion Tim remembers taking Dan Jones to one of his favorite places in Boynton Beach. They talked to the engineer and watched as he operated a train with three engines and 201 cars. The engineer was having trouble getting the train moving because he was under horse-power. The wheels were spinning on the third engine and sparks were flying ten feet in the air making a spectacular display in the night.

Fond memories at Quail Ridge are many including all the fine people he worked with from member, management and maintenance crew. "There is a tradition I picked up at Lake City, that any time someone leaves they get wet. That means getting sprayed or dunked in water. Having done this to some of my people when they left, I knew during my last week at Quail Ridge my turn was coming and figured my last day, Friday, would be the day. Wednesday, two days prior to Friday the General Manager Dick Kopplin was being unusually talkative. Looking back in hindsight I know now Dick was stalling for time. Also as chance would have it, I invited David Bailey, Mike Bailey and Dan Jones for lunch. Ed Heathcock, John Gallagher and a few others were there. I should have pieced it all together. Then, suddenly, the door swung open and in comes my crew. There is no reasoning with a mob. I'm a lame duck and can't threaten to fire them. They just picked me up bodily and I knew what was going to happen next. The maintenance complex is built like a courtyard or arena. All the doors are closed and there is nowhere to go. As tradition goes you get thrown out there like a lion. There are three two-inch pressure hoses at 120 lbs. per square inch. Dave Bailey was on the roof taking pictures and in the pictures you can't see me for the water. It was a cold day, so, when the water was turned off there I stood. A cold, wet, drowned rat. They got me good, with Dave, Mike, Dan, Dick, John, the crew, and others laughing. Believe it or not this is a fond fair-

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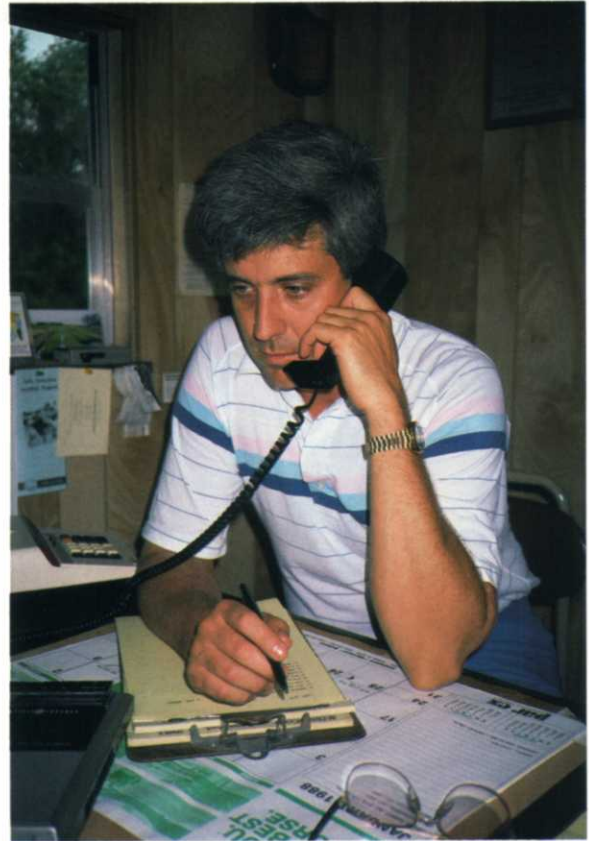


I told you we should have given Tim a raise.

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well for people well liked leaving Quail Ridge. My only salvation was while John Gallager was laughing at me, his truck was being put up on blocks. When he left to get in his truck, there it was with blocks under its axles. Having a sense of humor helps in this business. I have made a lot of friends, especially in Palm Beach County.”

“Dan Jones, Mike Bailey and Dave Bailey have a propensity to make me feel foolish. I’ve done some minor things to them, nothing like they’ve done to me. In 1986 we had a superintendents’ meeting at John’s Island. Dan, Mike and John Gallager all drove up together in Dan’s car. Really, I was too busy to come up with a joke. They arrived and parked the same time as our guest speakers, Whit Collins and Brad Johnson. Whit noticed that Dan had a flat tire and Whit in his southern accent said to Dan, ‘Do you know you have a flat tire?’ Dan just looked at Whit and said, ‘Sure.’ and walked on into the club house. Dan, expecting a joke on my part, thought this was part of it. When I greeted Dan, Mike, and John, I thought they were acting a little strange, and I had no idea what Dan meant when he asked me about the flat tire trick. Whit, being the guest speaker, made Dan even more suspicious. He thought I put Whit up to it. The ironic part of this whole thing is Dan did indeed have a flat tire. My mechanic took the tire downtown, had it fixed and put it back on the car. Dan never saw the flat tire. To this day I don’t think Dan believed he ever had a flat tire. I guess that’s the best trick I never had to pull on him.”



Tim asks Mike Bailey if he can hold for a minute while he talks to George.

At one point while Tim was taking care of business, we had an opportunity to talk to Pete Luedtke the Head Mechanic and asked him about Tim. Pete stated, “He tries to take the latest in golf course equipment and the latest technology and work with it and not only make it better for the golf course but also for the workers. And that also goes for the management part of it, people relationships and so on. I’ve never worked with anyone better than he is, as a person and as a boss.” This was the general consensus with everyone we talked to.

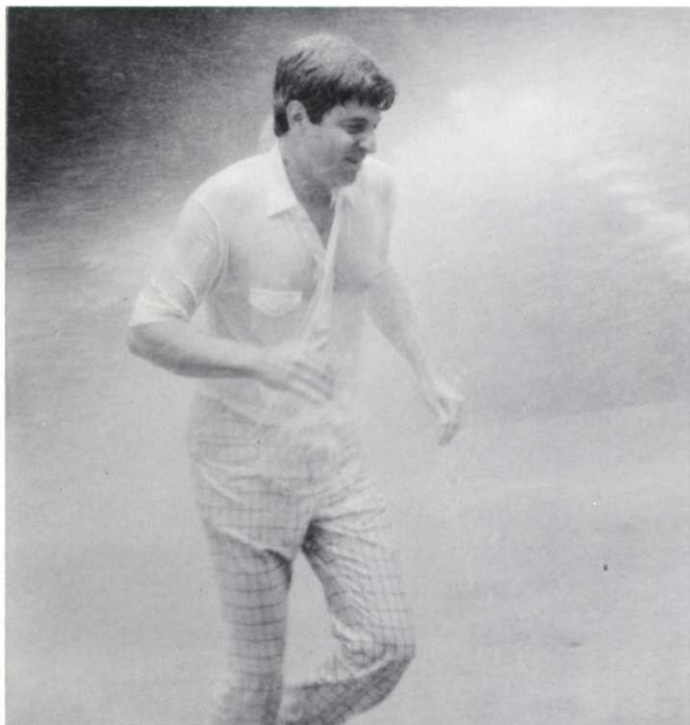
Tim is thankful to all the people that have influenced him along his travels toward his career goals. He speaks fondly of his mother and father, Toye and Will Hiers for their constant encouragement. Joe Lee and Lloyd Clifton, Golf Course Architects; Marvin Harvey the Golf Pro at New Smyrna Beach; Dan Jones, friend and confidant; and many many more too numerous to name.

Tim and his wife Angie work with young people at church, and are very busy with church activities. “I enjoy playing tennis for the exercise and try to play golf every other week so I can see the golf course from the player’s view point. Amelia Island is one of our favorite vacation destinations. A beautiful golf course, beach, good food, very relaxing, and it doesn’t take long to get there. My favorite food is seafood.”



You’re going to print that about Tim??!

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Tim leaves Quail Ridge C.C. gracefully.



Tim looks out over the natural beauty of Hole No. 9 on the West Golf Course of the John's Island Club.

Tim's looking forward to Angie taking up golf. They try to do things as a family. Most of their activities revolve around their daughter Ashley, now three years old. You can tell by the way he talks about her, she is the apple of his eye. He is very proud of his wife and daughter.

He's been inactive in associations these past three years. Priorities made it impossible while getting the job established. Improving the existing 36 holes and the new golf course under construction just kept him extremely busy. "I plan to get active again in the association, and hope someday Superintendents can visit and see the John's Island West Course."


Tim Hiers is the man behind the greens at John's Island Club. ■



Tim Hiers ... The master of organization, a superintendent's superintendent, husband, father, friend. My brother by choice. Editor.



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