

have a few comments and kudos on the 61st GCSAA Conference and Show held in Orlando last February.

Special thanks to the FGCSA members that served on the GCSAA Conference and Show Committee. They did an excellent job during the GCSAA Golf Tournament and the Conference. The GCSAA staff and newly elected

president, Gerald Faubel, were most sincere in their praise and thanks for a job well done.

Another job well done was at our host booth manned mainly by Marie Roberts and Paul Turcotte. They were excellent ambassadors to our visi-

tors. Dan Jones and Mike Bailey were everywhere taking pictures.

Tom Benefield and Mike Perham fulfilled their duties as voting delegates with great diligence, helping to formulate strategies to promote the most qualified candidates for national office.

I was able to spend time with representatives from other states who sought us out for information about our organization and publications. We received a very warm and substantial ovation for our record-setting chapter contribution to the GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund and Robert Trent Jones Endowment Fund.

I was able to recognize each of our ten chapters and The Florida Green for their contributions to this donation. In summary, the FGCSA represented itself well as the host chapter and was recognized for its activity, leadership, and organization. I was very

proud to participate as your president.

I must admit that I came away with a sense of urgency that we must do more, and do it soon, particularly in government relations and fund raising. They are related. The management and ownership of the golf courses in the state of Florida must unite with the golf course superintendents to formulate responsible strategies to present to the legislature and deal with environmental concerns.

Together, we must get the Florida Legislature to recognize and acknowledge the economic impact of the golf industry, so the government will consult with us on environmental and safety issues. If we do not, we will end up riding a compliance merry-go-round that leads to miles of red tape instead of acres of green grass.

How will clubs survive if 24-hour to four-day re-entry restrictions are imposed after spraying the greens?

For too long, the superintendent has been carrying the burden of fund raising for turf research. What about the owners and members who demand superior playing conditions? They have the most to lose if chemicals are banned or regulations make it impossible to manage the turf economically.

Of course, we can settle for lower aesthetic standards and less playable conditions, and that will be the result if we don't get the needed support.

There is a lot of money out there that needs to be directed to tax-exempt organizations to conduct turf research and to coordinate legislative activity. Gov. Bob Martinez just cut the ribbon on the 1,000th golf course in Florida. While that is

The applause was nice, but let's get to work



Joel D. Jackson

notable and shows our growth, it also tells me there is another course that will be a target for environmental regulation if we don't get our act together.

If each of these one thousand courses would budget \$1,000 each year — a fraction of their budgets — that would yield \$1 million annually. That amount, combined with generous donations from concerned individuals as endowments and trusts, can make golf in Florida environmentally responsible and economically successful. We are making positive strides in the efforts to find natural biocontrols for our turf pests, but we need more help from everyone in golf.

Superintendents often get caught between the proverbial rock and hard place when they walk the line between regulatory compliance and budget-conscious owners who demand ever-better playing conditions.

Instead of being scapegoats, we want to be partners in the successful, environmentally responsible operation of our golf courses for the benefit of all Floridians. A healthy, thriving golf course in

an urban area is still an excellent wildlife habitat and nature's best air and water filter for the environment.

And finally, I must notify you officially that Cecil Johnston, our candidate for GCSAA director, had to withdraw at the last minute, just as the FGCSA's national leadership was about to be recognized by the unparalleled support his candidacy was receiving.

But to participate at the national level, a superintendent must have the support of his club. While this endorsement was given initially, and widely distributed in campaign literature, it was withdrawn in the most severe and contradictory manner one month before the election.

I wish you could have heard Cecil's speech at the Meet-the-Candidates forum. He demonstrated the true professional qualities that make him a leader in our profession. Many said he was the best speaker of the evening.

Thank you, Cecil, for being willing to make the commitment for our profession. We hope you will try again. ■



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