

By Don Benham

What is the old saying? I've got good news and I've got bad news, which do you want first? Let's start with bad news.

Several newspapers in the state have started their annual attack on golf courses and chemical use again. The articles generally quote somebody who makes scientific-sounding comments that are based on opinions.

In Manatee County the school board has decided to buy some land from the University of Florida to build a new high school. The land they are

buying is part of the university's agricultural station on State Road 70. The newspaper has written several articles saying how deadly the land is. Here are a few quotes from articles submitted to the paper. "To use pesticide applications on neighbors' yards or nearby golf courses are chemical attacks - surely not as severe as terrorists but chemical attacks nonetheless. Every day is code red to us."

The last time I heard this particular lady speak was at a department of health meeting in Orlando where she had also said, "Golf courses are toxic holding ponds waiting to poison us." Many times the same people are quoted all across the state pushing their agenda to stop all chemical pesticide, herbicide, insecticide and fungicide applications.

There is a direct tie-in here to scare people into passing local ordinances that these items are in our drinking water and the ground children play on, and the real culprits are golf courses.

Enough of the bad news. What is the good news?

The *Palm Beach Post*, which has been very critical of golf courses, published a great article on golf courses and the difficulty of growing grasses this winter. They quoted John Foy and several golf course superintendents, including Mike Ballard at Abacoa Golf Course, Ray Kimberly at West Palm Beach Country Club and Mark Jarrell at Palm Beach National. I know that after the negative publicity two years ago, Mark Jarrell has been in contact with the paper to urge more balanced articles. His direct contact I feel has changed the way the paper reports about golf.

If your local paper writes something very negative that is not true, take the time to meet the reporter. Not to beat on him, but to provide him with facts. For example, how much water do we actually use? We are seen as heavy water users. You can create your own grassroots support and become one of the people contacted before they actually publish an article.

More Good news. I attended a Treasure Coast GCSA meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at Port St. Lucie. The meeting started at 4 p.m. and had a great agenda. Opening speaker was Kurt Kuebler, immediate past president of the Florida Club Managers Association.

Kuebler is the general manager of Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter. He spoke on employee relations and methods to improve them. The club even has a scholarship fund for children of employees and is funded by members. He conducts weekly meetings with department heads, so all departments could share what was happening that week. He praised Mark Heater, the golf superintendent, for his leadership ability. Kuebler was an excellent speaker and gave at least 15 workable suggestions.

John Foy spoke not only on the weather but, on losing some chemicals and cautions us on how to use MSMA. He said methyl bromide will probably be available past 2005, which was good news. He classified nematodes today as our number-one pest problem.

National Golf Foundation's Barry Frank gave an overview of where golf was heading in number of rounds played and courses under construction.

McGladrey and Pullen CPA firm talked on how accounting decisions affect course superintendents also. For example to buy or lease equipment they passed out a complete booklet on trends of private golf clubs including average cost per hole for maintenance broken down by region. It includes a good checklist for superintendents.

This program was put together by Kevin Downing and I would highly recommend it to all chapters. The good news is how good the program was and the idea of putting it on at 4:00 PM in the afternoon. The bad news is it was under-attended.

(Editor's note: The *Palm Beach Post* also recently ran articles on the Audubon ACSP Workshops and the results of the Florida Golf Economic Impact Study.)

For information about the author, see inside cover.

**Harrell's Founder Loses Lengthy Battle with Cancer at 74**

Harrell's, Inc. Chairman of the Board Jack R. Harrell, Sr., 74 died March 28 in Lakeland following a lengthy battle with cancer.

Harrell spent more than 50 years serving the turf and ornamental industry. His work began when his parents purchased a feed store in 1941 in downtown Lakeland. That location served local farm and ranch



customers in greater Lakeland for many years. Harrell was thrust into leadership of the business following his father's sudden death in 1964. The company soon expanded by adding five retail locations across west central Florida. The focus of the business during the 60s and 70s was lawn and garden supplies.

Harrell then directed the company into the

## In Memoriam

### A Bull Gator in God's Garden

An obituary elsewhere in this issue will tell you the facts of the life and passing of Jack R. Harrell, Sr., but it cannot begin to tell the story of what Jack meant to the industry and to so many individuals in the business. I cannot speak for all of them. I can only tell my story.

When I left Disney in 1988 for a brief bout with bentgrass at the Isleworth G&CC, it was then I got to know and appreciate Jack Harrell as a supplier, a man and a friend. The fact that Jack mentored me as I battled bentgrass in Central Florida will not come as a surprise to many long-time superintendents in Florida. His helping hand has lifted many of us out of the doldrums of despair and confusion, and guided us along the path to success.

Mr. Harrell knew his own products. He fiddled around with them on his home bermudagrass lawn, so he could discuss the successes and limitations of each product. It was practical, cracker-barrel agronomy at its finest, and it was free for the asking. We asked often.

The most honest and truthful sentiment I can offer is the warm feeling and sense of ease that would come over a person when they engaged Mr. Harrell in conversation, whether it was business or personal. To me he had the charisma of an Arnold Palmer. He was someone who made you feel special and important in that moment.

I couldn't tell you about his business savvy in the terms of bean counters and annual reports. All indications were that he was a shrewd and infinitely honest businessman. He would never fail to thank you and tell you he appreciated you and not just your business. All I know as a customer is that the service and support provided by him personally or by his representatives was always superior and customer loyalty ran both ways.

The industry has been made much better because of him. The Harrell's Turf Academy is an almost-unprecedented event, where the company literally pays for your education, entertainment and meals for two days each year. His sponsorship of turf causes and events was always generous. He touched so many of us along his life's journey, that he earned the greatest riches of a lifetime - the love and respect of his fellow man.

Today I am sad at losing my friend and a great mentor in our business, but I am heartened to know that Mr. Harrell has been able to lay down the burden of his illness. And I can see the twinkle in his eye as the old Bull Gator takes a place of honor in God's garden in paradise.

Joel Jackson  
March 28, 2003

# Good News - Bad News

## BENHAM'S BEAT



Don Benham

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specialty turf and ornamental market, beginning in the early 1980s. He oversaw construction of the company's first manufacturing plant and distribution center, which began operating in Lakeland in 1984. Through his initiative as chairman of the board, Harrell's has grown to be a recognized industry leader, serving turf customers across the Southeast and around the world. Harrell's serves the ornamental marketplace in all regions east of the Rocky Mountains. Manufacturing plants are now located in Alabama and South Carolina in addition to the corporate headquarters in Florida.

Known for his integrity and for his deep concern for people, Harrell was often consulted by industry associates throughout his home state. Superintendents would often request Harrell's assistance and advice regarding challenges faced on their golf courses. He received the Florida turf industry's highest honor in 1999 when he was awarded the prestigious Wreath of Grass Award. He also received the Larry Kamphaus Award in 2001, presented by the Central Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Aside from work, Harrell's interests included golf, aviation, Lakeland High School and University of Florida athletics, teaching Sunday School, keeping up with his active 93-year-old mother and following the exploits of his large family.

He was a member of Lone Palm Golf Club in Lakeland and Black Diamond Golf & Country Club in Lecanto, Fla. He was a charter member and deacon of Lakeside Baptist Church in

Lakeland, where he taught a men's Sunday School class for more than 40 years. He was a member of the Lakeland High School Century Club and was a Bull Gator at the University of Florida. He is a former chairman of the board of Lakeland Regional Medical Center and was a member of the Sixth Man Club at Florida Southern College.

Jack Harrell, Sr. is survived by his wife of 48 years, Norma; his mother, Lucile, Lakeland; by his sons, Jack, Jr., Lakeland, president and CEO of Harrell's; Fred, San Francisco, Cal.; daughters Susie Wilson, Lakeland, and Mary Lu Strawbridge, Ocala; and by 14 grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Lakeland Christian School, 1111 Forest Park Street, Lakeland, FL 33803 or to Redeemer Christian School, 155 SW 87th Place, Ocala, FL 34476.

**GCSAA Report**

**GCSAA Considers Relocation to Sunbelt Cities... or Not**

At its December planning meeting, the GCSAA board of directors engaged Chicago-based FPL Associates to narrow the study of the association's potential future headquarters location to three communities: Phoenix, Orlando and Jacksonville. In addition, the board reaffirmed the possibility of GCSAA remaining in Lawrence, Kan.

During the weeks of Jan. 13 and 20, principals of the search firm visited Orlando and Jacksonville to ascertain what opportunities exist for relocation. The consultant's report was provided to the board at the pre-conference board meeting, Feb. 6-7 in Hilton Head, S.C.

Prior to the GCSAA Annual Meeting, a town hall meeting was conducted Feb. 13 at the conference and show to answer questions and discuss issues regarding the relocation feasibility study. Based on the feedback from the meeting, the board of directors decided to remove from the ballot the amendment intended to allow the board to select a headquarters location on behalf of the membership.

In a press conference Mike Wallace, Jon Maddern and Steve Mona pledged to make sure the members would have access to all the information regarding any possible relocation attempt, and play a key role in making the decision. Citing the input and education behind the PDI implementation, the GCSAA leadership promised a similar approach to the relocation discussion. The topic had been awkward to deal with and needed to be made public because everyone is very sensitive to the impact on the GCSAA staff.

**Norman Supports Foundation**

If past performance is an indication of future results, then The Environmental Institute for Golf should yield significant achievements given its association with professional golfer and

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entrepreneur Greg Norman.

The highly regarded Australian has agreed to serve on the institute's board of trustees and head its newly created advisory council. Formerly The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America



Greg Norman

(GCSAA) Foundation, the institute was borne out of a year and a half study that analyzed the needs of golf and the strategic focus of GCSAA's philanthropic arm. Through interviews, respondents indicated that GCSAA's development efforts should be directed to the subject of the environment and that the entity assigned that task should be easily identifiable with that cause. The name change became effective Feb. 1.

Given Norman's philosophies and previous commitment to environmental preservation in the areas of development, turfgrass and golf course design, he is a logical leader for the new advisory council and also as an additional member of the institute's board of trustees.

"There may be no issue more important to golf than its relationship with the environment," Norman said. "Research, education and technological advancements have resulted in positive results for golf's association with the environment, but we cannot rest on what has been accomplished. New challenges face the industry, and I am excited to be involved with The Environmental Institute for Golf because it has the opportunity to have a profound positive influence on the game and business of golf. I was flattered and humbled to be approached by The Foundation and I am committed to doing all that I can to make the institute even more successful."

As part of his commitment to the institute, Norman has agreed to a generous pledge to the institute. Norman's gift is the single largest donation ever made to the organization. In leading the advisory council, Norman will assist the board of trustees with fund-raising efforts and provide input regarding the strategic direction of the institute. The board of trustees will continue to be responsible for all decisions relevant to the institute.

"Greg Norman is more than just an hon-

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orary figure,” says GCSAA CEO Steve Mona, CAE. “He wants to be involved and he is in a position to articulate the mission and goals of the institute to a wider audience than anyone. He has a tremendous passion for the institute and what it represents.”

According to Joe Black, chairman of the institute’s board of trustees, the advisory council will enhance the institute’s ability to communicate environmental issues to a wider audience, making it more recognizable in the world of golf, not just the golf course management community.

“This is a natural fit for Greg given his passion for the environment and the fact that he has several companies within his organization that are involved in the golf course management profession with concerns for positive environmental practices,” Black said.

Norman has not only proven to be one of the game’s top players, but also one its most successful businessmen. As chairman and CEO of Great White Shark Enterprises, he has established thriving businesses in golf course design, development, turf, apparel and other areas. Through his work with his turfgrass company, Norman has become intimate with the growing and conditioning of turf. In terms of his work with the environment, his company Medalist Developments works through a unique program of five environmental strategies in creating each community - a practice that fosters collaborative relationships with key stakeholders.

The institute’s emphasis on environmental stewardship will not be limited to its own initiatives; rather a philosophy of collaboration will serve as a guide to its activities. Partnerships will be sought with other organizations, including the USGA Green Section, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Audubon International, the Center for Resource Management and others.

**Superintendents’ and Owners’ Shows to Merge**

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) have agreed in principle to conduct a new golf facility management trade show in 2005.

The Golf Industry Show, which will combine the two organization’s existing trade shows, will represent the full spectrum of golf facility management and golf business. The inaugural event will be conducted Feb. 11-13, 2005 in Orlando. Both organizations will continue to host their respective educational conferences, which will run concurrently with the trade show.

“This move is about creating more value for our members and industry partners,” said GCSAA CEO Steve Mona. “There are many shared interests between GCSAA and NGCOA, not only on the organizational level, but for our respective members as well.”

The objective of The Golf Industry Show is to present an industry trade show that represents significant aspects of a golf operation - from ownership, feasibility and design to construction and operation. By joining together, the NGCOA and GCSAA bring together two key components - ownership and golf course management - offering an enhanced trade show experience to both.

“We are responding to the needs of our

membership and other supporters,” said Mike Hughes, executive director, NGCOA. “By launching this new show which will incorporate our existing shows, we are able to offer cost-effective solutions to members and exhibitors that attend both events.”

**Architect Pete Dye Accepts Old Tom Morris Award With a Challenge**

The Old Tom Morris Award, is presented each year to an individual who “through a continuing lifetime commitment to the game of golf has helped to mold the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris.”

Dye, a member and past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, has designed some of the country’s truly unique and challenging golf courses. Influenced by classical Scottish course design, he has created courses that combine those teachings with modern design.



Pete Dye

Dye has to his credit course layouts such as The Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; Crooked Stick Golf Club, Carmel, Ind.; The Ocean Course, Kiawah, S.C.; The Honors Golf Club, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Brickyard Crossing, Indianapolis, Ind.; and Old Marsh, North Palm Beach, Fla. These and others have

set him apart from his peers as an innovator in golf course architecture. Known for island greens, tiny pot bunkers and the use of railroad ties in bulkhead construction, Dye’s golf course designs provide some of the most enjoyable challenges in golf.

While Dye accepted the award with honor and grace he threw down the gauntlet and challenged the audience to join architects and the USGA in putting limits on golf equipment technology which is threatening the design integrity of the world’s historic golf courses.

**Election of New Officers**

Jon D. Maddern, CGCS at Elk Ridge GC in Gaylord, Mich. was elected president and succeeds Mike Wallace, CGCS who will become the immediate past president for one more year on the board. Maddern becomes the seventh GCSAA president to come from Michigan.



Jon Maddern, CGCS

Mark Woodard, CGCS, parks & recreation director for Mesa, Ariz. is our new vice president and Timothy O’Neill, CGCS, from the Country Club of Darien (Conn.) is secretary.

Elected to two-year terms as directors were CGCS’s: Robert Maibusch (Illinois); Ricky Heine (Texas); and Mark Kuhns (New Jersey). Incumbent directors David Downing (N. Carolina) and Sean Hoolehan (Oregon) will continue in the second year of their terms.

**2003 Plants of the Year Part 2**

In an ongoing effort to promote the production, sale and use of superior Florida-grown plants, the Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association announces the 2003 selections of the Florida Plants of the Year. This program was launched to promote under-utilized, but proven Florida plant material. These proven ornamentals are selected on an annual basis by a group of growers, horticulturists, retailers, landscape professionals and University of Florida faculty.

For a plant to be considered a Plant of the Year, set criteria must be met, including good pest resistance, require reasonable care and be fairly easy to propagate and grow. An award-winning plants must also exhibit some superior quality, improved performance or unique characteristic that sets it apart from others in its class. Here are two more 2003 selections for your consideration:

**Common Name:** Sandpaper vine or Purple wreath vine

**Botanical Name:** *Petrea volubilis*

**Hardiness:** Zones 9-11

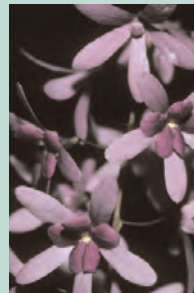
**Mature Height and**

**Spread:** 35’, but may be maintained at 10-15’ tall and wide

**Classification:** Tropical vine

**Landscape Use:** Flowering vine for fence, trellis, arbor or pergola

**Characteristics:** This fast-growing evergreen vine has large, coarsely textured leaves. Long arching sprays of amethyst-colored flowers bloom in late winter



Sandpaper Vine

through the summer. The Central American native is a woody-stemmed climber that twines around any available support. Thriving in full sun, this tropical vine tolerates drought once established. The inflorescence is reminiscent of wisteria.

**Common Name:** Little Gem Magnolia

**Botanical Name:** *Magnolia grandiflora* Little Gem

**Hardiness:** Zones 7-9

**Mature Height and**

**Spread:** 30-40’ Tall x 10-15’ Wide

**Classification:** Evergreen tree

**Landscape Use:** Compact Specimen Tree

**Characteristics:** This moderate grower has compact, upright branches in a narrow form. The dark green leaves with rusty-bronze coloring on the undersides are smaller than those of a standard Magnolia. Smaller fragrant white blossoms



Little Gem Magnolia

6-18” across appear in spring and then emerge sporadically through late summer.

Photos by Stephen Pategas-Hortus Oasis