

# Inside the Ropes



NBC technicians check out radios to Central Florida spotters at Bay Hill. Photo by Joel Jackson.



By being inside the ropes I got a close-up of Arnold Palmer (right center) as he shared a moment with Chad and Amy Campbell before the official presentation. Photo by Joel Jackson.

By Joel Jackson chapter for turf research.

Every March, the PGA Tour makes its swing through Florida from Miami to Jacksonville with stops in Palm Beach and Orlando in between. Over the years, FGCSA's local chapters have made connections with NBC Sports and helped to provide spotters and scorers to assist in the televising of the four golf tournaments. We each earn about \$40 per day for our effort and that money goes to our

Tour caddies who don't have a bag to tote that particular week are also recruited to provide yardages with leader groups and club selections on par-3 tees, but the TV producers also want eyes and ears with each group to keep track of shots, the order of play and up-to-date score reporting. The networks want people who are golf savvy and observant. That's where the local superintendent chapters come in.

The TV production people who decide how to present the tournament must make split-second decisions on which camera on which hole to use to tell the story. While these folks hunker down in high-tech trailers watching a dozen monitors, there are two to three dozen spotters and scorers walking the fairways and on call to provide the current status of a player. These spotters and scorers enable the director to show the next action shot having the most impact on the tournament.

It is organized chaos and not for the thin skinned as the pressure builds in the cooker.

Members of the South Florida, Palm Beach, Central Florida and North Florida chapters generally serve on the Scoring Line and the Who's Away Line.

The Scoring Line is slightly more organized since the primary job is to call in the cumulative scores of the players after they complete a hole. The players have a group number, say No. 37. The order the players appear on the Pairings Sheet for that day is the order the scores are given all

day. Brevity is critical, so no names are used.

Using the Bay Hill Invitational as an example, Group 37 was Stuart Appleby and Chad Campbell in that order since Appleby was the leader at the first tee. If Appleby was minus 16 and Campbell minus 12 when they started, and they both birdied the first hole, the scorer would say, "Group 37 reporting." The producer responds, "Go ahead." The scorer reports, "Through number 1: minus 17, minus 13." No names are used after each hole. The producer may call and verify scores if they change dramatically.

The Who's Away Line can be a little more frenetic as the director bounces around looking for that interesting shot, usually by the top five or six players in contention. Spotters are usually assigned to the top 12 groups.

If your group isn't scoring well, you don't get too many calls. It can make for a quiet day, but you must pay attention and always be ready to respond to questions like, "Who's away on 15 and what's he

putting for?" or "How many putts left on No. 9?" Your group may be holding up John Daly and they want to know when to switch back to Big John.

While we are sometimes chastised for adding too much commentary to a shot or situation, they always want to know when a player hits a shot into trouble that will likely cost him a shot and alter the chase for the lead. So you have to be on top of any penalties and drops that occur.

Gallery watching can be tempting sometimes, but when you're wearing that radio headset you're on the clock and responsible for helping to put on a good show. I mentioned earlier about not being thin-skinned while doing this gig. The director watching all the monitors and trying to show the next best shot will shout out questions and half the times not listen to the answers as someone else is feeding

him information, so he impatiently repeats the question two or three times, and you get frustrated that they aren't listening to your stellar sports reporting. It's not personal; it's just business. It's also exercise. I averaged 6.8 miles a day according to my digital pedometer.

I fudged a little on the rules. I did take my camera with me, but I kept it in my fanny pack which also housed bottled water and snacks to fortify me during the daily treks. Since my group finished just ahead of winner Chad Campbell, I hung around the 18th green and snapped a shot of Arnold Palmer congratulating Chad just before the formal ceremony.

I heartily recommend FGCSA members to put in their bid at their chapters to help out during these telecasts. It's fun, educational and helps to raise research funds. Not a bad way to participate in your association.

## The Importance and Value of Networking and Participation

By Bruce Williams, CGCS.

*(Editors Note: The following president's message and article shared by former GCSAA President Bruce Williams are testimony to the advantages and benefits of being active in your local chapter.)*

I received a call from a former employee a few weeks ago. I had not heard from him in over 20 years. He had relocated to Ohio and had been a golf course superintendent for 15 years at a nice private country club. Unfortunately, he was told that he was fired and did not know where to turn. That is why he called me with hopes that I could help him find a job.

I asked this fellow a few questions and it went something like this. "Are you a member of your local

chapter?" He said "No." "Are you a member of GCSAA and are you familiar with the Employment Referral Service?" He said "No". "Do you utilize the USGA and their agronomists?" He said "No". "How about your local university....do you have any contacts there?" He said "No."



Bruce Williams, CGCS, MG

This poor fellow was a hard-working guy who kept to himself and never developed a network of people who could help him. While I was happy to hear from him after all those years. I really was not in a position to help him. He had painted himself into a corner. While this is an extreme case, I know that there are a number of our

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# 2003 Photo Contest Results

This is the final category of presenting the winners of the 2003 photo contest. **Category 4 – Scenic Holes**



**First Place.** "No. 15 on the Quarry Course" by John Cunningham, Black Diamond Ranch, Lecanto



**Second Place.** "No. 2 on the North Course" by Trevor Brinkmeyer, Shadow Wood C. C., Bonita Springs

## 2004 Photo Contest Rules

### Category 1 – Wildlife on the course:

includes any critter on the course that walks, flies, swims, slithers or crawls.

**Category 2 – Formal Landscaping:** includes annuals and ornamental shrubs and trees planted in formal beds on the course or club entrance.

**Category 3 – Native Areas:** includes beds of native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses used in naturalized areas to reduce turf inputs and aquatic vegetation plantings used to create habitat and protect water quality.

**Category 4 – Scenic Hole:** includes any view of a golf hole (panoramic or close up) that demonstrates the scenic beauty of a golf course.

### Easy Rules

1. Color prints or slides. Prefer prints. Only one entry per category. Digital images: Digital image entries must be taken at a resolution setting of 300 dpi or higher and saved as Jpeg or Tif format images. Images taken, saved and sent at lower resolutions will not qualify for the contest. If you're not sure. Send a print instead.
  2. Photo must be taken on an FGCSA member's course. Photo must be taken by an FGCSA member or a member of his staff.
  3. Attach a label on the back of the print or slide which identifies the category, course and photographer. **DO NOT WRITE DIRECTLY ON THE BACK OF THE PRINT.** Each print shall be attached to an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper using a loop of masking tape on the back of the print. Slides should be in plastic sleeves for easy access for viewing. Digital images must be accompanied by the same information in an email or document on a CD.
  4. A caption identifying the category, course and photographer should be typed or printed on the sheet of paper below the mounted print.
  5. Judging will be done by a panel of FGCSA members not participating in the contest.
- Mail entries in a bend proof package marked "PHOTOS DO NOT BEND" to Joel Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando, 32819. Entries postmarked after August 1, 2004 will be automatically entered in the 2005 Photo Contest.

peers who aren't far away from that same situation.

I challenge each person who reads this to sit down and make a list of people who can help you find a job. If you run out of names in a minute or two, then you probably need to work harder at networking. There is no better way to network than to get involved and attend monthly chapter meetings.

As some of you may know, I moved to California in 1997. The North Course was in a grow-in phase and construction was ready to begin on the South Course. That first year was a very busy time. With a change in climate, a multiple course facility, and many new challenges, it was important for me to gain as much local knowledge as possible.

There was no better way than to join the local chapter and take advantage of the opportunities that the chapter had to offer. Joining is good, but participating is better. I tried to attend most meetings. I met many superintendents and a lot of commercial members. I always tried to play golf with three new people each month. It provided me with a quicker learning curve for so many people in the industry.

I would like to encourage everyone to take advantage of what your chapter has to offer. It is a wonderful way to network. Meeting people, building relationships, solving mutual problems, etc. will help you throughout your career. You never know when you may need assistance at your job or in a finding a new one. Learn from the example that I have cited and develop

your network today and throughout your career. Don't wait until it is too late! (See *Networking sidebar*).

Now that you have a list of potential network opportunities, it is time to develop a strategy to build and cultivate relationships with as many people as you can. I will try to provide a few tips that I have learned, over the years, to help you cast a wider net in developing relationships.

**Business Cards**

Be certain to have professional business cards with you at all times. Keep your information current. The greatest value is not in handing out your business cards but in exchanging them to develop new contacts. The exchange of business cards alone will not ensure the memory of your encounter. Follow up with an e-mail or a note to set you apart from the crowd.

**Working the Room**

Set a goal of making a certain number of contacts at any meeting or function you attend. If there are 100 people at a meeting, it is reasonable to assume that you might walk away with 5-10 new contacts depending on the type of function. Target people who are leaders or influential in the industry. Most people are not interested in talking to you for half an hour, but surely will give you three to five minutes of their time.

**The Elevator Speech**

A long time ago, I had a mentor who taught me about the "elevator speech." He indicated that if you got on an elevator and were going up five floors, what would you say in that short time frame to sell yourself to someone?

We should all have a speech prepared in advance that would allow us to make a connection with anyone. When someone says hello and asks what you do for a living, you should have a quick reply that would be interesting and memorable.

Although I call this an elevator speech, it is more applicable at social functions, out on the golf course, in the locker room, etc. When introduced to members or guests, at my golf course, I like to reply "Hi, my name is Bruce Williams, the golf course superintendent here, and I hope I make your game more enjoyable with the conditions that you see today." This usually leads to further conversation. The goal is to make a lasting impression.

**Six Degrees of Separation**

In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell talks about the origin of this phenomenon. He describes how a large group of people ultimately became connected to one another by just a few surprisingly connected individuals who provided common links. Gladwell talks about how there are pivotal people in any network of connected individuals who know a lot of other people. Connect with those who are connected.

When I meet people I try to find out what we have in common. It is amazing that I rarely find someone that I have nothing in common with. Usually we are familiar with a certain golf course, a city, an individual, a hobby or something else. Without probing you can ask a few questions to find common ground and expand into those areas of mutual interest.

**Points to Consider**

- Don't wait until you've lost your job to start networking.
- If you are clueless in the field of networking then get a mentor.
- Be prepared and consider every day an opportunity to meet and connect with new people.
- Don't get caught without it...business cards that is.
- Don't use a silly sounding e-mail name like "MachoMan" or "TimeforHemp" as it will gain attention but not in a positive manner.
- Don't be arrogant and listen as much as you talk.
- Don't monopolize someone's time. Five minutes is a good limit at an initial introduction and there is a difference between following up and becoming a pen pal.
- Dress to impress and look as good as or better than everyone else in the room or at the meeting.
- Without saying a word you are sending a message by your attire when meeting someone.
- Don't be shy. It may not be easy for some but, with practice, you



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## Networking

As we develop our careers it is increasingly important to manage a set of contacts that become a part of your network. Remember that for job seekers it is often not just what you know but whom you know as well. Taking that a step further it can also be not only whom you know but whom they know as well.

Let's make a list of all the people that can help you in your career. It is not necessary to use names but for this exercise we will use positions to indicate areas to develop contacts.

- Fellow superintendents
- Former employers
- General Managers
- Golf Professionals
- Golf Association staff
- Local distributors
- Manufacturer's representatives
- Educators
- Researchers
- USGA agronomists
- Media
- Golfers
- Neighbors
- Relatives
- Former classmates
- Alumni from your school
- Seminar instructors
- Golf Course Architects
- Consultants
- Headhunters
- Regional Agronomists for Management Companies
- GCSAA staff

make yourself known to others.

- Always be truthful and never embellish your qualifications. Overstating yourself will end up giving you a tag of being dishonest.
- Serious relationships develop over time. They endure because you work at it. Most people have little use for a person that uses you for what they want and then drops you like a hot potato.
- Remember to repay the favor of those that have helped you. Take time to help the newcomers and

youth of the industry. Extend your hand to them and be sincere.

In closing, it is easy to see why networking is so complex. There is a lot to be considered. Nobody grows up with a networking gene in his or her DNA. It is a learned skill. By following some of the tips I have provided you too can get connected. While I have never thought of making new contacts as merely a lead for a job search, I can tell you that it has been the most enjoyable part of my career. I am one of those individuals who truly feels that the most important thing to me, over the last 35 years, is not what I have accomplished but the people that I have met along the way!

## As It Lies Things I Love About Our Game

By Jim Walker



**The subtle clatter** my

irons make as they nuzzle against one another driving down a cart path. Steel-shafted irons make a slightly more metallic sound than

graphite. But either is terrific.

**Watching my father-in-law** knock in a 20-footer for par or birdie. His smile lights up the whole golf course.

**Hitting one** of these new drivers whose head is the size of a two-slice toaster right in the middle of the club face. I didn't think I would ever get used to that sound, but I have.

**Watching my wife** hit a driver flush. Great sound. Beautiful trajectory. Striped, right down the middle.

**Hitting a five-iron** dead solid perfect into a 20-mile-per-hour

wind. The ball never moves one foot right or left.

**Holing a bunker** shot from 40 or 50 feet that would not have gone six inches beyond the hole had it not gone in.

**Rolling in** a slippery downhill snake for all the cookies in a skins game.

**Watching any tour pro** hit driver on a par four or five with a wide landing area. Bombs away!!

**The eight-iron** I holed for eagle on the par five 5th hole when Joe Pantaleo was the superintendent at Eagle Trace. That one cost him a few pesos.

**The two-iron** Joe Pantaleo hit from the left fairway bunker on the fourth hole at Crandon Golf Course (then The Links at Key Biscayne), when he was the superintendent there. That one cost me a few pesos.

**Looking at** any nice golf course under the low light intensity of early morning or late afternoon.

**Watching a row** of heads performing at optimum pressure and gallons per minute. I love the "fog effect" you get looking down the line from the first head to the last.

**A perfect green** stimping 10-plus.

**Standing on the seventh** tee at Pebble Beach, or the seventeenth at the TPC Stadium Course.

**The whispering whir** a reel makes as it spins and kisses the bedknife ever so gently.

**Watching any spinner** top dresser dusting sand on a putting green.

**Bunkers** which are perfectly raked and edged with exactly the correct amount of sand.

**Watching a green** come to life from stripping the sod to fumigation, sprigging, growing in and opening day.

**Going to the West** Coast of Florida for a few days to play golf with my brother-in-law or up to Winter Haven each year to play with our friend Jim "Cornfed" Kosters, a Master PGA Golf Professional who has worn out two sets of Ping Eye Two irons in the 20-odd years I have known him.

**Making a hole in one**, particularly my second which I saw land on the green and go in the hole.

Watching someone else make a hole in one and buying me drinks with a smile on their face.

**New golf equipment.**

Drivers, putters, wedges, irons bags, gloves, balls. Any and all of it.

**Meeting other people**

who really, really, really, love golf.

## Mark My Words Fuzzy Math Just Doesn't Calculate

By Mark Jarrell, CGCS

From where I'm sitting, the chickens have started coming home to roost on the issue of too many turf schools turning out too many graduates seeking jobs as golf course superintendents. Some may not see it as cause and effect, but here's what I see happening.

I've had several conversations with longtime superintendents who are ready to just pack it in from the demands and pressures of the job – pressures more frequent and intense than they've ever felt before. As a matter of fact,



one friend did just that, last week tossing his keys on the desk and quitting on the spot. Another friend still

reports to work each day, hanging in limbo while his greens committee searches for his replacement.

While the underlying reason may be the sluggish economy, you'll never convince me that dedicated professionals would normally be treated this way if there weren't 500 guys ready to step in and take their place. The spe-