



Rock On, Uncle Freddy!

The Uncle Freddy Band rocks at a Memorial Day barbecue in Casselberry.

By Joel Jackson

All work and no play can make Jack a dull superintendent. One group of superintendents has found a unique way to unwind and relieve the stress of maintaining manicured Central Florida golf courses. They get together once a week and have a jam session playing classic rock music for their own enjoyment and decompression. Occasionally they perform publicly at the Kerryman's Pub in Altamonte Springs and at a couple of private parties. But the main goal is just jamming for the fun of it.

The Uncle Freddy Band, as they are known, is the result of a road-tripping bull session between Lake Nona superintendent Brett Harris and John Kopack, then superintendent of the Legacy Club at Alaquá. They were on a holy pilgrimage to golf's Mecca, Augusta National, in 2002 when they discovered they had a common love for music.

Both had been involved in bands years ago. Harris no longer owned a drum set and hadn't played in nearly 12 years. But the musical conversations continued back in Orlando over beers after Central Florida Chapter monthly meetings. Soon Jack Kress, the superintendent at The Alaquá Club, and his mechanic, Steve Kulka, became regulars in the bull sessions until they finally agreed to meet and just goof around.

They drew from Blues, R&B and classic rock performers like Elvis, Joe Walsh, Stevie

Ray Vaughan among others to create a play list. By mid-2003 they had 25 songs they could play reasonably well. Well enough that, after a year of weekly Friday jam/practice sessions they made their public debut at the Central Florida Superintendent/Vendor Tournament in February 2004 at Deltona Hills. Originally they called themselves "Supt-Up" (Souped Up), but later changed the name to The Uncle Freddy Band.

Subsequent appearance offers didn't come rolling in, but John Kopack's favorite watering hole, the Kerryman's Pub agreed to let them perform under the beer tent in the parking lot on St. Patrick's Day. They have done a couple of gigs at Kerryman's. It was Brett on drums, Jack Kress and Steve Kulka on lead and rhythm guitars, John on vocals and a mean tambourine and Wayne from the Kerryman's on bass guitar.

Wayne moved on a short time later and Mike Hamilton, head mechanic from the Ventura Golf Club, filled in on bass for awhile and is still the group's sound man. It turned out that Mike Dean, John's assistant superintendent at the Legacy Club also played bass and, according to Brett, may be the most talented musician of the bunch.

The musical influences within the group are Jack (Blues), Steve (Classic Rock) and Mike (Master of improvising). Brett says, "Wherever we perform we need a little room for the sonic blast. The mashers definitely outnumber the finesse boys." While the group has concentrated on covering tunes from known bands,

...the fun-loving, stress-relieving turf gurus meet weekly in an un-air-conditioned warehouse in Altamonte Springs. They drag out some fans and a barbecue grill and have steaks or ribs while jamming on a Friday night.

Steve has been writing some original songs for the band.

The group used to practice in John's office in the golf course maintenance building, and then they moved into a vacant rental home until it was, duh, rented. Now the fun-loving, stress-relieving turf gurus meet weekly in an un-air-conditioned warehouse in Altamonte Springs. They drag out some fans and a barbecue grill and have steaks or ribs while jamming on a Friday night. Coincidentally it turns out this warehouse complex is also the practice home to several area pro bands. Who knew?

The group has no aspirations for a professional music career. They like to perform in public to get the crowd feedback and maybe help defray some expenses, but they are content to mostly play for themselves for the fun and relaxation on Friday nights. Rock on!

The Quarterly Question

What do you do away from work to relieve stress or just balance your life beyond turfgrass?

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're introducing a new feature, "The Quarterly Question." We will ask FGCSA members one question each issue to shed some light on the range of positive, negative and humorous and experiences we have all had along the way.

I go out on my boat and get away. Sometimes just to cruise but most of the time to go fishing.
Chris Neff, Timaquana CC

I build, repair and service guitars and play in a classic rock band.
Brett Harris, Lake Nona G&CC

A group of superintendents and suppliers get together once in awhile for fishing expeditions. I also coach and/or help support my kid's sports teams.
Matt Taylor, Royal Poinciana CC

I settle back and enjoy a glass of merlot, cabernet or an Italian red.
Darren Davis, Olde Florida GC

Twelve superintendents in the Everglades GCSA have earned their boat captain's licenses.
Mark Black, Quail West GC

I am an NCAA football referee."
Mike Mongoven, Shell Point GC

I am a Civil War history buff.
Mark Jarrell, Palm Beach National GC

Is it lobster season yet?
Paul Crawford, Palm Beach CC

I try to go skiing once a year. Colorado is great. Been to Winter Park, Aspen, Crested Butte, and Breckenridge. Park City Utah is another great

spot. Easy in and out of Salt Lake and a 50-minute drive to Deer Valley, Park City and The Canyons slopes. I have been lucky enough to take the family most of the time and also spent time with just the boys. We have been out skiing with other families as well: Steve Wright from Boca West; Ken Ezell of Clifton, Ezell and Clifton; and M.G. Orender. I would like to go more than once per year, but time never seems to be abundant enough. Great scenery, great exercise, and just a whole different get a way.
Tom Alex, Grand Cypress Resort

We like to travel. Highlights so far: The Carolinas; California Coast and Palm Springs; Pacific Northwest; Minnesota; London, Edinburgh and St. Andrews."
Joel Jackson, Florida GCSA

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Photo Contest Results

Category 4 - Scenic Hole



First Place (tie) — A Florida Holly frames sunrise on the 12th Tee at Bent Tree, Sarasota. Photo by Tom Biggy



First Place (tie) — Sunrise on the 18th Hole. Photo by Teri Hoisington, Lansbrook GC, Palm Harbor.

These views show some of the many daily benefits of working on a golf course.

Congratulations to the winners. The judges declared a tie.

2006 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 the highest resolution setting on a camera rated at least 2.2 megapixels and saved as JPEG or TIF (or TIFF) format images. For the technically inclined, we need at least 1800 pixels by 1200 pixels (2.16 megapixels) of digital information to print a 6x4-inch image at 300 dpi. 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-inch 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, or 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.

6. Mail entries in a bend-proof package marked, "PHOTOS DO NOT BEND" to Joel Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando, 32819. Entries post-marked after August 1, 2006 will be automatically entered in the 2007 Photo Contest.