

## Leventhal Named SuperNews Superintendent of the Year

Stuart Leventhal, CGCS and the Interlachen Country Club have made news in this magazine before. As one of the first certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries



Stuart Leventhal is in the driver's seat of his new Club Car Carryall and is joined by his wife, Roz and Mike Packer of Club Car as he was named Superintendent of the Year at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson.

in the central Florida area, Leventhal has long distinguished himself as a consummate professional in the golf industry.

He and his club have hosted 17 consecutive Florida Turfgrass Association turf research fundraising tournaments each January. The club waives any golf fees and provides a sumptuous lunch at cost in order to maximize the net proceeds for research. There is always a guest speaker to educate the gathering of superintendents and club officials.

Those of us lucky enough to call Leventhal friend and to putt on his lightning-fast greens know how dedicated he is to his family, his club and golf course and to his profession. So we were doubly pleased when he was named by *Golfweek's SuperNews* as its 2005

Superintendent of the Year. He was nominated by his general manager, Don Emery, who was impressed with his total control and organization in the face of the disastrous hurricane damage to the course. The award is sponsored by Club Car, a leading manufacturer of golf, transportation and utility vehicles for the golf industry.

Besides his grass-growing and course-management ac-

men, Leventhal has volunteered to serve his profession and industry as a Central Florida GCSA board member and officer including the chapter presidency. He also serves on the Mid-Florida Turf Advisory Board for the Orange County Extension Service and the annual CFGCSA Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot Open Committee.

All the hoopla surrounding this award is a little unsettling for Leventhal who knows that mother nature giveth and mother nature taketh away at the drop of a hat. While he is deeply touched by his club's outpouring of congratulations and recognition, he tries to not let the highs get too high or the lows get too low. "This is a humbling business," he said, "You can't take anything for granted."

According to the Club

Car news release in *SuperNews*, Leventhal doesn't hesitate when asked if the summer of 2004 was the most difficult period in his 25 years of taking care of golf courses.

"It was a rough summer, by far the toughest I've been through," said Leventhal who led restoration efforts to reopen the Interlachen golf course after it was devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne in August and September.

Hurricane Charley leveled more than 1,500 trees and left the private course outside Orlando under ankle-deep water. Entire fairways were buried under trees and debris on some holes, and the road to the clubhouse was impassable. Leventhal and his staff had the course ready for play in less than two weeks only to face the aftermath of two additional hurricanes in the next six weeks.

"It was hard work and we put in a lot of hours, but emotionally it was even harder," said Leventhal. "The word I use was, 'overwhelmed.' The good thing, though, was that the members never asked, 'When are you going to have it ready?' They never put any pressure on us."

Mike Packer, Club Car vice president for utility and international sales, who presented the winner with keys to a Club Car Carryall 294 all-wheel drive vehicle, said Leventhal "epitomizes the qualities that make superintendents such a vital part of our industry.

"Throughout his career, Stuart has shown tireless devotion to his course and his members. Last year was exceptional in terms of the challenges he faced, but the leadership and dedication Stuart showed are the characteristics he's built his reputation on."

Leventhal was selected from 90 superintendents who were nominated by employers, co-workers, golfers and friends. Editors of *SuperNEWS* narrowed the nominations to nine finalists before making the final selection.

## Chapter Round Up Education Tops Superintendents' Early Spring Agenda

### Calusa

Deep Creek GC hosted our annual Yellow Ball Tournament. This fun event consists of four team players each taking turns playing a yellow ball on a hole. The score of the yellow ball counts as one of the two "best ball" scores on that hole. Lots of strategy involved in who plays the ball and what hole they should play it on, and whatever you do, don't lose the ball!

### Central Florida

Stuart Leventhal, CGCS hosted the 17th Annual FTGA Research Tournament at the Interlachen CC in January. Florida Turfgrass Association President Tom Wells and FGCSA Director of Communications Joel Jackson, CGCS Retired, gave the gathering of superintendents and club officials an update on projects, and superintendent initiatives in fund raising and government relations. Guest speaker Steve Smyers showed how architects try to use the natural lay of the land for environmental, aesthetic and shot-making reasons in the design of a golf course. After lunch the group played a two-man scramble event with Nancy Henderson and John Lammrigh from LPGA International winning top honors. \$5,000 was raised for turf research.

**First Flight: Gross** – Nancy Henderson and John Lammrigh, LPGA International; **Net** – Jay Jamison and Dennis Pickavance.

**Second Flight: Gross** – Steve Wright and Robert Anderson, Boca West G&CC; **Net** – Andy Ragsdale and Doug Devries.

**Third Flight: Gross** – Gene Stys and John Raycroft, Indian River Colony Club; **Net** – Tom Alex and Joel Jackson.

Leventhal was to be in



From left: golf course architect and guest speaker Steve Smyers, FTGA President Tom Wells, host Stuart Leventhal, CGCS and Central Florida GCSA President Chris Cartin at the 2005 CFGCSA Research Tournament at Interlachen C.C. Photo by Joel Jackson.

the limelight again in February as Golfweek's SuperNews magazine, in conjunction with Club Car, selected him as Superintendent of the Year at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando. See the related article elsewhere in Spotlight.

We held our annual Superintendent/Vendor scramble at the Club at Cypress Head in Port Orange. Thanks to new superintendent Dennis Pickavance for having the

bership drive to enable superintendents in Florida's Panhandle west of Tallahassee to overcome geographic travel limitations and make it easier for them to be part of the Florida GCSA, which serves all state superintendents through its initiatives. Jeff has volunteered to travel west and provide regular FGCSA Board reports on state issues to the group. Shane Bass, CGCS will assist Jeff in this effort.



USGA Green Section gives Regional Talk to Everglades Chapter. From left: John Foy, director USGA Florida Region, Jim Snow, national director of the USGA Green Section (seated), host Mark Black, CGCS, Quail West G&CC and Todd Lowe, agronomist USGA Florida Region. Photo by Joel Jackson.

course in great shape for the event. Kudos to Hal Richburg and his Victoria Hills Club for being named No. 7 public course in Florida on Golfweek's list of America's Best Courses.

#### Coastal Plains

Congratulations to Eddie Snipes, CGCS and the SouthWood Golf Club for being named to Golf Digest's list of America's Best New Courses.

External Vice President Jeff Heggen is spearheading a mem-

The Gulf Coast GCSA territory stretches nearly 200 miles from Panama City to Pensacola. Their chapter is subdivided into three zones: East, Central and West to accommodate its members. Dr. Brian Unruh has been serving the chapter as a liaison for FGCSA news for many years and he hosts the Gulf Coast Turf Expo at the West Florida REC at Milton every June.

And speaking of our Panhandle peers, congratulations to Larry Livingston,



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"Hey Mom! I'm going to be in the Florida Green," says Roy Wilshire, CGCS as he celebrated a hole-in-one on the 7th hole of his course during the 2005 Ridge Invitational. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Tom Egnaczyk, the 61-year old former assistant superintendent at the Links of Boynton got an unexpected retirement bonus when he won the Florida Lottery. Photo by Scott Wahlin.

CGCS and his Camp Creek G.C. in Panama City for being selected to the No. 8 spot on Golfweek's Florida list of America's Best Courses.



At the FGCSA Winter Board meeting in Bradenton, President Joe Pantaleo accepted a \$1,000 check for the FGCSA Benevolent Fund from Ridge GCSA External Vice President Jeff Brown. Photo by Joel Jackson.

**Everglades**

After another successful Christmas Tournament held at Mark Black's Quail West G&CC that benefited the Children's Home Society, the busy winter golf season began and included an education break in the form of a USGA

Regional Talk also held at Quail West. The target audience for these regional talks is the superintendent and club officials and the topics are universal hot button issues at clubs: green speed, overseeding, transition, trees and shade. Jim Snow, national director of the USGA

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From left, Jack Harrell, Jr. presents winner Steve Bernard with portrait of his father, Jack Harrell, Sr., drawn by David Purcell, at the 14th Ridge GCSA Jack Harrell, Sr. Invitational.

Green Section gave also gave an interesting history of the USGA and turfgrass research to introduce the program. He was ably assisted by our two Florida Section agronomists, John Foy and Todd Lowe.

In March we will take a dinner cruise on the Naples Princess for a social outing and we have entered the March 12 St. Patrick's Day parade in Naples. We will have a fleet of golf carts and vehicles with trailers to carry our members, spouses, kids and guests to help promote our profession and industry.

Springtime education and social events will continue as the chapter and the Naples Beach Club host the annual Everglades Spring Symposium in April and the 35th Annual Poa Annua Classic in May. This year two golf courses will be used so that no players will be turned away. Medalist golfers will play the Naples Grande course and fun seekers will play a scramble format event at the Naples Beach Club.

### North Florida

Our 13th Annual Mike Richards Tournament will be history by the time this Florida Green goes to press, but we are looking forward to this year's event at the Jacksonville G&CC. Guest speakers this year will be Bob Randquist, CGCS our first GCSAA director from Florida since our own late John Hayden was a director some 22 years ago. Bob will talk about GCSAA projects. Also on the agenda will be FGCSA Director of Communications Joel Jackson giving us an update on government relations issues.

Some of our meetings, events and elections have been getting reported in the "Golf News" published here in Jacksonville. Good to let the golf community know that we exist and contribute to the game. "Golf News" has also been running a series of short golf maintenance articles written by Joel Jackson. The articles are designed



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## Golfweek Magazine's State and National Ranking of Florida Golf Courses

### Golfweek's Best Public Access Courses in Florida and their superintendents

1. TPC at Sawgrass (Stadium Course): Fred Klauk, Jim Abate
2. World Woods (Pine Barrens): Jim Rawlings & Cory Bell
3. Ocean Hammock: Todd McKibben
4. World Woods (Rolling Oaks): Jim Rawlings & Brad Barbee
5. Bay Hill Club: John Anderson

6. Southern Dunes: Ward Pepperman
7. Victoria Hills, Hal Richburg, CGCS
8. Camp Creek, Larry Livingston, CGCS
9. Innisbrook (Copperhead): Keith Einwag
10. Doral Resort & Spa (Blue), Eric Von Hofen & Lukus Harvey
11. El Diablo: Darren Irwin
12. Amelia Island Plantation (Long Point), Ron Hill & Bruce Blanchard

13. PGA National (Champion): John Lee
14. Lake Jovita (South): Tony Disano
15. Grand Cypress Resort (New Course): Tom Alex & David Hill

### Other Florida Courses in Golfweek's Top 100 National Rankings

#### Classic Courses

15. Seminole GC: Hal Hicks
69. Mountain Lake Club: Scott Scamerhorn, CGCS

#### Modern Courses (Built since 1960)

14. TPC at Sawgrass: Fred Klauk
26. Pine Barrens at World Woods: Cory Bell
32. Black Diamond Ranch, John Cunningham, CGCS
33. Calusa Pines GC: Jim Whalen
62. Jupiter Hills: Dick Gray
71. Old Memorial: Trent Inman, CGCS
80. Bear's Club: John Katterheinrich
92. John's Island Club: Greg Phenegeer, CGCS
97. Pine Tree GC: Talbott Denny

to educate the public about the whys and wherefores of some of our cultural practices.

### Palm Beach

Congratulations and happy retirement wishes go out to Tom Egnaczyk, assistant superintendent at the Links at Boynton Beach. Tom is 61 years young and doesn't qualify for early Social Security (age 62) just yet, but he says he'll manage somehow. Tom has been in the Palm Beach area since 1975 and has served as superintendent and/or assistant superintendent at many area courses over his 30-year career. His latest gig as the assistant at Boynton Beach was an effort to scale back just a bit and transition into retirement. His plans got an unexpected boost recently when his wife Sylvia picked up a couple of Florida Lottery quick picks on a second trip to Publix on a fateful Saturday.

Like the true professional that he is, he reported for work the next day after picking up his winnings in Tallahassee. Since retirement now was on a fast track, he gave his club a month's notice

and hung up his boots Feb. 27. Tom says that his top priority is making sure he protects this new-found legacy for his four kids and eight grandchildren – and there's another on the way. He and Sylvia will enjoy their new freedom by traveling to Alaska, the Panama Canal, Scotland, Ireland and finally Poland the land of his ancestors. Tom says, "It has been great to be in this business, but at 60-plus I'm ready to pass it on to the next generation."

Egnaczyk's boss, Scott Wahlin, CGCS, says this stroke of good fortune couldn't have happened to a more deserving gentleman, although he quipped, "Tom had started saying, 'That's Mister Egnaczyk to you' during his final weeks on the job." Joe Dougherty will take over as the Assistant Superintendent.

### Ridge

We were pleased to make a \$1,000 donation to the FGCSA Benevolent Fund at the Winter Board Meeting in Bradenton. The 14th Annual Ridge GCSA Jack Harrell, Sr. Invitational came off without a hitch at the

Grasslands CC in Lakeland, and even though it was a windy as ever, the sun was out and Roy Wilshire, CGCS had the greens rolling as fast and true as ever. So true in fact that Roy had a hole-in-one on the seventh hole. Says Wilshire about the shot, "It was a precise knock-down 6-iron executed into the teeth of a howling wind. Steve Bernard from the Adios Club in Palm Beach won the low gross honors and a framed David Purcell portrait of Jack Harrell as the winner's trophy.

Alan Puckett and the Club at Eaglebrooke will be the cover story for the summer issue of the Florida Green magazine, and kudos to Tony Disano and the staff at Lake Jovita G.C. for making the Top 15 list of Golfweek magazine's Best Public Access Courses in their 2005 rankings.

### Seven Rivers

Congratulations to Jimbo Rawlings, Corey Bell and Brad Barbee for having the Pine Barrens and Rolling Oaks courses at World Woods ranking 4th and 5th in Golfweek's 2005 list of best public access courses in Florida. What

a treat for all the folks teeing it up in our 13th Annual Jeff Hayden Envirotron Classic at Worlds Woods on April 18th.

We are also proud to note that Darren Irwin and his El Diablo Club also made the Golfweek Florida list coming in at No. 11, and in the national private course division for the Top 100 Best Modern Courses built since 1960, our own John Cunningham and the Black Diamond Ranch placed No. 32.

### South Florida

What a wild shootout between Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods at the Ford Doral Open. The course looked absolutely fantastic on television. Hats off to Doral's Director of Grounds and Maintenance Eric Von Hofen and Blue Course Superintendent Lukus Harvey and the whole Doral crew for a job well done. We couldn't help but notice that NBC's Johnny Miller goofed again calling the overseeding Poa annua instead of Poa trivialis. Johnny must be thinking of California greens. That's the second time Mr. Grain has made

that faux pas. Last year Bob Murphy bailed him out. Susi and Jim Walker organized the spotters for NBC. Bet there was some wheeling and dealing among the group to see who was going to work with the Woods-Mickelson pairing.

### Suncoast

The Bradenton CC hosted the Florida GCSA Fall Board Meeting in October as President Joe Pantaleo is trying something new by moving some of the state board meetings around the state this year. We will be changing our old habits too by moving our traditional March Suncoast Scramble to the Jacaranda West C. C. in Venice for our 2005 event. We didn't meet in February due to the G.I.S. in Orlando, and we will not be meeting in April. Our next big gathering will be at our annual meeting and golf tournament in May at the Sara Bay CC. This tournament will be

the second of three qualifiers to determine the Suncoast Champion for entry into the 2006 GCSAA Golf Championships.

### Treasure Coast

With spring upon us, our thoughts turn to hosting the 2005 Blue Pearl Tournament on May 9th at The Medalist Club in Hobe Sound. This is our big fundraising event that generates research dollars as well as supporting local school turf and environmental programs. Recently, members Ralph Cessna and Craig Weyandt took part in a state sponsored workshop that was focused on updating the Pesticide License process and examination. Thanks for donating your time and energy to participate on issues affecting your fellow professionals.

### West Coast

The year 2005 is off to a fast start coming on the heels of our Vendor Appreciation Day held at the

University of South Florida in Tampa. Thanks to our hosts Mike Wilcox and Mike Grace and cooking sensation Ray "The Griller" Miller for the good eats. In January we unveiled our new website and also announced we would accept credit card payments for meeting registrations. The Board of Directors is looking at holding a GCSAA Regional Seminar in July of this year.

### Florida GCSA

To recap some of the communications advances statewide the following chapters now have websites in operation or under construction: Calusa, Central Florida, Everglades, Florida GCSA, Suncoast and West Coast.

Our 2005 Government Relations Delegation traveled to Tallahassee in March during this year's Legislative Session to lobby for support of our turf research matching funds proposal that Mike Goldie, our

legislative consultant, has been putting together with the help and support of several key legislators. In addition we will be promoting our Golf BMP manual that we are working on in conjunction with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the USGA, and environmental and industry representatives.

If you missed the 2005 GIS in Orlando and the FGCSA reception then you missed good ones. The new format certainly was a change for many, but should have great longterm benefits for our profession. Paul Crawford, the reception chairman, organized a "rocking" good time for more than 1,000 FGCSA members, sponsors and guests. One of the new traditions at our reception is a Benevolent Fund drawing to raise money for superintendents in need of assistance. We raised \$5,100 in Orlando and John Johnson from the South Seas Plantation on Captiva Island won the cash prize.

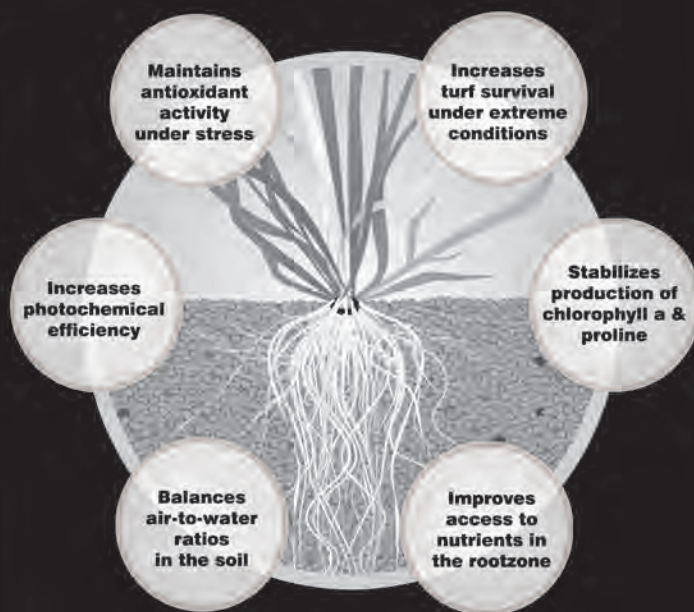


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Analysis

# Floridians Take Seat on Board, National Title

By Joel Jackson

The 2005 Golf Industry Show was a success in its debut this past February in Orlando as the combined conference and show for both the Golf Course Owners Association and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. It succeeded on a variety of levels.

As an attendee to most of the conferences since 1985 let me say that I have never been to an unsuccessful conference and show. There is always something that I take away from each event: powerful opening session speakers, classroom knowledge, new professional contacts, and peer networking. Some years one area may be stronger than the other, but it is never a waste of time. So like many of you, I wondered what the new-fangled "Golf Industry Show" was going to be like.

The 2005 event was like any other conference and show and I mean that in a good way. Except for the practice range, artificial putting green and Pro Shop Solutions areas, it looked just like a normal superintendents' trade show experience. The Solution Centers concept



Colorful decorations created a festive tropical island backdrop for the 2005 FGCSA Reception. Photo by Larry Kieffer.

# New Golf Industry Show's Orlando Debut Successful



Samantha and Greg Kriesch from the Calusa GCSA staff the Benevolent Fund Table. Photo by Larry Kieffer.

is a good idea I think, especially if they can group suppliers related to the topic around them. It sure makes sense for walking the floor and visiting booths. Some superintendents said the Building the Green Center was perhaps a novel curiosity that appealed more to the owners and others who don't see the inner workings of green like they do. The fast pace and ingenuity was applauded, but the educational impact was maybe a little low on their scale. To view a slide show of the whole process log on to [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) and check the Golf Industry Show link for Building the



Seth Strickland, Miami Shores CC, shot a two-under 142 to win the individual trophy and lead the Florida No. 1 Team to victory in the team event at the 2005 GCSAA Golf Championship. Strickland's boyhood golf idol Jack Nicklaus presented him with the trophy. Photo by Joel Jackson



Green. It was a novel idea to say the least.

The main thing about the show is that I didn't see or feel any loss of superintendent identity or ownership of the event that some people either feared or predicted. As for our industry partners who help support us at the national level all the way down to the local chapters, I know this combined show concept has to be very welcome from a financial as well as practical standpoint. The future of trade shows was hanging in the balance and this reorganization is a good thing for all concerned. So, on with the show!



*Huge logo projected over the dais at the Opening Session.*

### Opening Session

Our President Joe Pantaleo did a fine job welcoming our national brethren to Orlando with some Florida golf industry facts, and you couldn't find a more enthusiastic GCSAA Golf Champion than Seth Strickland, who had his dream come true when his childhood golf idol Jack Nicklaus presented him with the winner's trophy.

Then golf legend (and longtime Floridian) Jack Nicklaus took the podium to receive the 2005

Old Tom Morris Award. His remarks showed the depth of his intensity for playing the game and for his commitment to golf course design. But I still couldn't find that spark, that personal charisma that would let me warm up to him. I think he is such a private person that only those who work closely with him can truly appreciate his genius. He certainly has earned my respect for his accomplishments, and he did say repeatedly that

bringing a superintendent on a new project is a priority of his in order to complete the team needed for bringing a project on line.

His presentation and the Opening Session suffered when they tried to do a taped interview for the Golf Channel and it ran long, causing some people to have to leave to attend other conflicting classes and sessions. But as we all know when you try something new, you learn from your mistakes.

### General Session

I had the pleasure of hearing Peter Kessler speak at a USGA Regional Conference in Orlando a few years ago. That golden baritone, broadcaster's voice of his is a gift he uses well. When I last heard him he was the top dog at the Golf Channel; this time he was a former employee and unfortunately he zinged his former employer a couple of times, which I thought detracted from his presentation. But he did deliver some



*Networking and socializing are valuable benefits of attending the Golf Industry Show. Photo by Larry Kieffer.*





*Powerhouse was the name of the band at the FGCSA Reception and they put on a great show. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

poignant and humorous golf anecdotes as only he can.

It's all about numbers

For those bean counters who have to keep score, the 2005 GIS was a measurable success in terms of

overall attendance (22,723), seminar seats sold (7,329), exhibitors (826), qualified buyers (8,149) and exhibit space (270,360 square feet). It was a nice rebound from the recent economic slowdown that had the numbers flat

or slightly depressed in recent years. I heard a lot of positive comments from folks taking seminars. The push by GCSAA to grade and evaluate sessions and speakers has generally paid off and most everyone gave high

marks to their instructors.

One other high number that was typical when the GCSAA comes to Orlando was the over 900 people who attended the FGCSA Reception on Thursday night at the



*At last count over 900 people attended the FGCSA Reception at the 2005 GIS in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson*





John Johnson (left) was the lucky winner of the Benevolent Fundraiser Drawing. FGCSA President Joe Pantaleo offers his congratulations to John and announced the Benevolent Fund was increased by \$5,100 through the donations at the FGCSA Reception. Photo by Joel Jackson

Rosen Centre Hotel next door to the convention center. Paul Crawford, CGCS made a triumphant return as Reception Chairman by organizing, with the generous help and support of

our sponsors. It was a great evening of food and entertainment for FGCSA members and guests. A new conference tradition got a terrific shot in the arm as our Benevolent Fund received more

than \$5,000 in donations. Many thanks to Samantha and Greg Kriesch and other board members for manning the Benevolent Fund table. John Johnson from the South Seas Plantation G. C.

won the cash prize in the fundraising raffle.

Multiple food and drink stations made wait times for refreshments very short and the tropical island

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Several GCSAA staff members accepted FGCSA Reception Chairman Paul Crawford's invitation to join us for some food and fun at the Orlando party. Photo by Joel Jackson

themed decorations provided a festive background for the band Powerhouse from the southwest Florida area, and many in the crowd danced the night away including several GCSAA staff members who were our guests courtesy of an invitation idea from Crawford, "Hey why not invite these folks? They are on the road, working long hours to put on a good conference for us. They

shouldn't have to go back to the hotel and order room service at the end of the day. Why not give them an opportunity for a special night out on us as a way of saying thanks for what they do this week and all year?" From the thank-you card they sent after the conference, it was obvious that they really appreciated the gesture on our part. Hey gang! See you next year in New Orleans.



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# Building the Green



*From piles of dirt on a tarp on the concrete floor of the convention center to a finished green holding a putting contest, the volunteers from the Golf Course Builders Association and GCSAA out did themselves in the five day marathon project. Photos by Larry Kieffer and Joel Jackson.*



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