

California Dreamin' in Southwest Florida

By Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

(Editor's note: Stories like the one Kyle Sweet is sharing here is but one more example of the talent, imagination, creativity and adaptability of golf course superintendents everywhere. By displaying a "can do" attitude, superintendents demonstrate their value to their clubs in many unexpected ways. They just don't teach this stuff at turf school.)

Today's golf course superintendent is a far cry from the role filled many years ago. The ris-

Well, for the fun of it, let's add golfer/member relations to that laundry list. Although this may be an area that many of us shy away from, I would like to highlight one great evening at The Sanctuary Golf Club that might just change your mind.

The golf season in Southwest Florida takes place from November to April. Early in the 2003/2004 golf season, a group of five members approached me about hosting a "California Dreamin'" party for more than 200 members at my maintenance facility. Their ideas were excellent and

dred feet from the best beaches on the Gulf Coast, we needed the beach at our front door. With 20 tons of fresh bunker sand delivered, we got it. All of the equipment was removed from the shop. If it wasn't bolted down, it was removed. And we placed the sand throughout the entire equipment-storage area with a front-end loader. A dance floor was created with sand approximately 6 inches deep and, throughout many seating areas, the sand was installed at a 3-inch depth. A bunker rake was used to thoroughly smooth the surface and the result was amazing.



How to build a beach. Start with 20 tons of sand and an empty maintenance building.

ing expectations for turfgrass management, environmental safety, and ongoing labor challenges are enough to keep anyone busy.

without hesitation I began to work with them on the party that took place Feb. 29, 2004.

Although our facility is only a few hun-

That was the easy part. Now, with the sand in place, the members and an interior decorating company sprang into action and decorated both



Bunker rake. Beach rake. What's in a name? It smoothed out our indoor party beach just fine.



The members and interior decorators took over to finish the transformation to a beach scene.

the interior and exterior with palm trees, murals, ceiling coverings, food and beverage tents, bars, and seating for more than 200. Once the band set up, the preparation was complete, and the facility didn't look or feel much like the "shop" we started with earlier in the day.

Fortunately, my family and I were

invited to attend along with my two long-term assistants. We greeted many members attending the party, took photographs, and of course discussed questions or comments about the golf course. The Sanctuary food and beverage department supplied the finest food and drink for the evening and a wonderful time was had by the



From shop to shore, we were now ready to entertain 200 people at the beach party.

members and staff alike.

Now, several weeks later, our department is still hearing the compliments on our cooperative effort with our members and the use of our facility in creating a "California Dreamin'" party that everyone will remember.