

Giving Back!

When doing just a little can mean so much to so many

By Jim Colo

At first glance you may just see a field. With a second look, it looks very much like a golf course. In 1995, a 23-acre parcel of land in Dyer Park (Palm Beach County) was leased to the Children's Golf Foundation (CGF), which is the only chapter of The First Tee program designed for mentally and physically challenged children.

Palm Beach County leased the land for the next 100 years at \$1/year solely for the purpose and mission of the foundation. That mission is to teach mentally and physically challenged children life's lessons through the game of golf.

The objective for the foundation is to increase socialization skills, increase their range of motion, build confidence, and to provide them a game they can participate in for the rest of their lives. The kids hear only two phrases as they are taught: Great swing or great shot.

Keith Stuhler, president and CEO of The Children's Golf Foundation, had volunteered for two years and then was asked to help design and build this facility in 1999. After seeking assistance from local companies in 2001, Stuhler called on superintendent Bryan Plummer from Fort Lauderdale CC to help transform the property into a golf course.

Through countless weekend hours, Plummer and Stuhler cultivated the land and managed to change the grounds into a golf course with limited funds and using equipment donated by various vendors and golf courses.

Stuhler comes from a background rooted in the golf industry. Having six uncles, all PGA professionals and his father, who owned and operated a golf course, Stuhler made his career out

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of being a PGA professional himself. He has recognized high standards and values within the PGA organization and feels proud of the accomplishments with the Children's Golf Foundation and his small part in designing and building such a facility gives these incredible children game of a lifetime.

Six years ago I was introduced to The Children's Golf Foundation through Plummer. I became involved because I saw something special. In my 13 years of golf course maintenance, I have been given many opportunities. I have worked at Old Marsh Golf Club since 1994. I have met many people who have influenced my career.

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The foundation serves 200 children

during the school year and more than 300 children in the summer. Each child who is a member of the club is given his or her own set of golf clubs. The children are taught by PGA professionals and assisted by caring, dedicated volunteers. The golf course has an 8,000 sq.ft. putting green, an 18,000 sq.ft. practice tee and four fully functional "target" greens on which to either practice or to play conventional golf. The course can be converted into 15 possible golf holes that the children can play and it carries a slope no higher than 2 percent, which is a requirement for The Americans with Disability Act.

The Tam O' Shanter clubhouse finishes off the property with its warm setting and comfortable "back porch" feel for parents to watch their children learn the game of golf.

Their "superintendent," Zach Stuhler, is learning emergency medicine by night and working very hard by day to keep the golf course looking great. With the devastation of four hurricanes, times were real tough. Donations were being distributed among many other organizations. The CGF needed all the assistance they could find. Through talking with the Stuhlers, I was able to come up with a few solutions.

When times get tough, people need help. The CGF's golf course needed a boost. Following hurricanes Jeanne, Frances, and Wilma, things at the foundation struggled. After explaining to my crew the needs of The CGF, they all agreed to volunteer their time. We put together a group of guys to help them get back on their feet. My two assistants, Eric and Donovan, my common grounds superintendent, Carlos and 18 crew members from Old Marsh and five members from Emerald Dunes G.C. gave their time on



Volunteers from the Old Marsh and Emerald Dunes golf courses pose in front of the Children's Golf Foundation clubhouse. Superintendent Jim Colo is kneeling on the right.

a Saturday in June. We accomplished quite a bit in one day. Our crews pulled weeds, fixed irrigation heads, planted new flowers around the clubhouse, patched weak areas with sod, edged, trimmed and fertilized the turf. Just one day's effort made a big difference for the foundation.

Recently, the foundation was infested by mole crickets and invaded by fire ants. After explaining the situation to Brian MacCurrach, southeastern sales representative from Bayer Environmental Sciences, he donated 14 acres worth of Top Choice. Two days later I applied it with one Lely spreader. Thanks to Bayer and MacCurrach, the CGF is clean of fire ants and mole crickets

Much of my involvement includes

assisting with fertilizer and chemical applications, irrigation needs, cultural practices, and consulting with Zach on weekly activity. We talk about timing of fertilizer applications, weed control techniques, and mowing practices. My time spent with the foundation is 10 – 20 hours a month in phone conversations and site visits.

Currently, the CGF continues to look for assistance in labor, equipment, fertilizer/chemical resources and most of all, money. Jack Nicklaus is one of the foundation's major supporters through public service announcements and other endeavors. Also, through The Loxahatchee Club, Dottie Pepper will name The Children's Golf Foundation a major charity for an LPGA event in January.

If any of you or your crew members would like to assist us in maintaining The CGF's golf course please call me. If you are physically unable to help and would like to financially support the Children's Golf Foundation, please contact Keith Stuhler.

This organization shows that despite the capacity and limitations of individuals, everybody should be able to enjoy all the opportunities possible in life. Through very small efforts of many people, not only can we make a tremendous difference for the children, but also for the parents who see and feel the strong effects the program has on the kids.

Jim Colo may be reached at 561-662-7931; Keith Stuhler may be reached at 561-842-0066

2006 Photo Contest Results

Winners of the Wildlife Category in the 2006 Florida Green Photo Contest.



First Place: Gator Day at the Pool. By Michael Mongoven, CGCS, Shell Point GC.



Second Place: Sandhill Cranes by Ted Johnson, Fairwinds GC.

2007 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 specimen trees, annuals and ornamental shrubs 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-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 e-mail 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.

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, 2007 will be automatically entered in the 2008 Photo Contest.



OLDE FLORIDA FLOOD
(No Hurricanes in 2006, but) "Ernesto only brought us 4 inches but that was at a time when the water table and lake levels were at their highest. We have had more than 20 inches since the storm that has us looking like this."

– Darren Davis



Another superintendent from the Naples area (whose name escapes me at the moment) told me at the LCCC Tournament in November that he had recorded nearly 60 inches of rain from June to September 2006. And here in Orlando we're reporting a 13-inch deficit for the year.

- Editor

THOUSAND-WORD IMAGE AT LAGORCE

Good morning, Joel. Life can sometimes be stressful for a superintendent, but there are rewarding times on the course that puts things back in perspective. I was riding the course Saturday morning and I came across this image and thought that you would enjoy it.

– Frank Sbarro, La Gorce CC

Thanks for sharing Frank. To paraphrase an old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand worries."

- Editor



Things I'll Never Understand



If I Live to a Hundred

As I See It

By Jim Walker

Why do so many guys tee it up from the black and blue tees and not get it past the ladies' tees? Dude! Hello! You're not going to do that for 17 more holes are you?

The practice facility at the Palmetto Golf Course, where my wife Susi works, does a quarter of a million dollars a year in range balls. Eighty percent of the patrons bring two clubs with them to hit: their driver and wedges. I realize Hogan said the three most important clubs in a golfer's bag were the driver, wedge and the putter. But he was talking about people who could actually hit the ball, not the pork chops who hit from the blues and not get it past the reds.

You know you're in for a long day when the lady in the pro-shop line in front of you has the tee time just before yours and asks for a "pair" of golf gloves.

Why did it take so cotton-picking long to develop this high-tech golf equipment? Yeah, sure, now we got it... now that I'm so old I can't hit it out of my shadow.

Someone asked if we had a "Pace of Play" policy? I said, "Yes! Our policy is your place on the golf course is directly behind the group ahead of you, and not directly in front of the group behind you!"

We have too many golf courses in the U.S. and we're driving ourselves nuts trying to cultivate new business and keep the folks we already have. In England you must have a proficiency card from a golf pro or an R&A or USGA handicap card to play most of the courses on the other side of the pond.

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Changing the subject. Could someone please tell me why cigarettes, scotch, ice cream, French fries, cheeseburgers, cookies, cake – and a zillion other things that taste so good – are so damn bad for you? The inventors of all these good/bad things should be shot.

How can some people buy a car and drive it until the wheels fall off? I get sick and tired of really once nice cars in less than two years. My poor wife – we looked at a Cadillac in 2003 and she got it in 2006. I would have died from

hives waiting four years for a car I really wanted. My poor, poor wife – two people and three cars. There probably would be more if we lived in a house instead of a condo.

Why did it take so long to get high-definition television into people's homes? I had a hi-def TV almost a year before my cable company delivered their first hi-def programming.

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Why did the Dodgers and the Giants have to move to California? Why do the professional sports franchises need a new stadium or arena every 20 years? I hope the people in Boston and Chicago never let Fenway Park or Wrigley Field meet the same grim reaper all our other cathedrals of the game have succumbed to.

When will we see the first 8,000 yard golf course?

Why do so many people pick their noses while they are driving? They must think they are invisible in their cars. Got a hot news flash for you homey – that hot chick you were flirting with a second ago is now getting grossed out.

Did you think that rap "music" would still be around 20 years after Sir Mix-a-Lot said, "Baby got back" and "Put 'em on the glass?"

A 5.1 Matrix, THX 7.1 Surround Sound with sub-woofers. Ever listened to really killer stereo on a \$20,000 sys-

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tem? That's right baby. A mobile fidelity sound lab, half speed master virgin vinyl album playing on a Thorens turntable. Blows those strident CD's right out of the water.

Why do wonderful people like Marie Roberts and Joel Jackson have to retire? I don't like to think of the day when I can't call them with state or local chapter business.

Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing?

These are just a few of the things I'll never understand even if I live to be a hundred.

Inconvenient Truths



**GREEN
SIDE
UP**

**By
JOEL JACKSON**

Former Vice President Al Gore spent much of 2006 touting his movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," across the country. The truth, according to Mr. Gore and other "experts," is that the planet earth is in the death grip of a global warming trend, and only if mankind will rein in its burning of fossil fuels can we hope to stem the predicted catastrophic consequences.

I might be able to be convinced that the planet is recording warmer temperatures, but then I've also been told by "experts" that 120,000 years ago the sea level was 20 feet higher than it is today. There weren't any factories or automobiles back then, and something sure melted those ice age glaciers way back then and it wasn't mankind. And then there were those "experts" who predicted another ice age back in the 1970s. Where are they now, predicting global warming?

Inconvenient truths! Mr. Gore, can you stand a few of my inconvenient truths gleaned from reports and observations during my short time on earth? Mine will cover the global warming issue and the current buzz on protecting water quality in Florida.

The earth's forests, fields, green belts (golf courses, parks, lawns, etc) and oceans (66 percent of the planet's surface) are huge carbon sinks that absorb a whole lot of carbon dioxide.

Along with factories and vehicles, humans expel carbon dioxide when they breathe. Will we be required to hold our breath to prevent global warming?

Given the absolutely abysmal accuracy of the 2006 hurricane season due to unforeseen global changes in climate phenomena (El Nino and the Bermuda High), why should we subscribe to the predicted global warming and wreck our economy?

Which is more likely to affect global (planetary) temperature change. Smoke stacks and exhaust pipes or a slight change in earth orbit or solar flares and sun spot activity that happens in periodic galactic cycles?

Regarding water quality and the fixation on fertilizer applications by local officials and activists as the primary cause of nutrient loading in Florida's waterways.

Nutrient loading: All fertilizers may be nutrients but not all nutrients are fertilizers.

Outdated and faulty municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants dump more nutrients in our waterways than fertilizer applications on turfgrass.

It is winter and the geese, ducks and other waterfowl are heading south and filling our bays, lakes and ponds. And here comes the phosphorus and urea with them. How do you stop millions of birds from pooping in the water?

Studies by O. M. Scotts Co. show that approximately 50 percent of homeowners never, ever fertilize their yards, and another 35 percent apply only once or twice.

Only 15 percent of homeowners pursue high-maintenance lawns, applying fertilizers three or four times per year.

A healthy stand of turfgrass prevents

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erosion, filters runoff, uses less water and makes more oxygen than a tree, and it doesn't fall on power line or houses in a windstorm. Maybe they should reduce the number of trees by 50 percent instead of turfgrass in lawns.

It is one thing to be concerned about people living and working in coastal zones and the consequences of rising water levels. Caveat emptor – Let the buyer beware. People have lived and built in flood and danger zones ever since time began. It is another thing to say the "truth" of the matter is that man is causing this global temperature shift.

Asteroids striking the planet and mammoth volcanic eruptions can cause global weather changes along with wobbles and changes in the earth's orbit around the sun. Locally people can foul their nests for sure and there is nothing wrong with cleaning up the air in any smog-affected area.

I marvel at the computer model that recently computed that lawnmower and leaf blower engines contributed 7 percent of the air pollution in California, and now the EPA has granted a waiver to require catalytic converters on small gas engines. Want to compare that to the jet airliner's pollution contribution flying Gore around the U.S. plugging his movie? Give me a break.

The inconvenient truth is each person will believe what he wants to believe in the face of conflicting reports and cherry-picked facts that will support any argument you want to make.

It comes down to motives and character and a willingness to admit that man can't control nature.