

Earl Jones aka “the voice” had such a problem stuttering as a child he was basically mute until a teacher helped him overcome the problem by reciting poetry in class.

Robert Trent Jones Sr. designed golf courses – some of the most famous in the world. Robert De Niro drove a taxi and became a famous actor. Robert Fulton was always steaming until he built a boat to go up and down the Hudson. Robert E. Lee lost a war, rode a horse named Traveler, and surrendered at Appomattox. Robert Nesta Marley put Reggae on the map and lifted the genre from Jamaica and gave it to the world. Jah rastafari. Robert Shaw was a brilliant actor who got eaten in Jaws. Robert the Bruce was the most famous King of Scotland. He ruled from 1315 to 1329.

Johnny was always on the spot. When he was overseas during World War II, he got “Dear John” letters. John was a movie star who went on to be

a Rooster with “True Grit,” and was a “Duke” to his friends. There was a John who was the second president of the United States, and then his son John Quincy became a president too.

John was part of this English rock group called “The Beatles.” They named a plaza in New York after a guy named John who made a lot of money. John Denver thanked God he was a country boy and later went to Colorado to get “high.” I heard tell of a man named John Henry who was a steel driving man and died with a hammer in his hand. Another famous John played tennis with some success despite his terrible temper. Another killed a President named Lincoln. A John named Belushi burst on the scene of Saturday Night Live, made a movie called Animal House, and went on to be a famous “Blues Brother.”

But the most famous name of all is Family. Love yours every day. They are your most precious possession.

No More Choir Practice!



**GREEN SIDE UP
BY JOEL JACKSON**

I’m tired of preaching to the choir. This is for the club managers, owners, golf professionals and influential golfers at all Florida golf courses. You folks must deal with marketing,

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revenue, customer satisfaction, lessons, social gatherings and events, taxes, insurance, etc. These are all important facets of the golf course business. I'm sure your associations deal with these topics at your meetings and conferences.

Are you also dealing with the "Green Movement" and how it affects your course?

I'm asking because I haven't heard too many questions coming to our group, the superintendents. We've been tackling the issues to come up with the solutions, but this is bigger than our group can handle alone. We need everyone in golf to come together and leverage our numbers, influence and contacts to stand up for the Florida golf industry.

If you use reclaimed water, you haven't been overly concerned about water restrictions, yet the cost for this water is rising, sometimes doubling, and in some cases, the permitted amount is being reduced. That affects the bottom line, even if you don't have brown spots on the course.

If you have a permit to use ground and/or surface water for irrigation, it allows you to pump about 40 percent of what your property needs. The rest must come from Mother Nature. When it doesn't rain, that 40 percent gets whacked another 30 - 45 percent by water restrictions.

Superintendents talk with the various districts about equitable allocations to keep their (your) business thriving, but talk is cheap and action sometimes comes very slowly. The wheels of government grind slowly while your grass burns up. Maybe a little more organized heat to create a louder squeaky wheel would get better results.

Currently there is also a wave of local fertilizer ordinances being drafted, discussed and enacted under the guise of protecting the local coastal water quality. Protecting the water quality is a good cause. Most of us like to recreate on our state waters and we want them as clean and safe as possible. But the focus of these local governments is on turf fertilizer use. While they have

mainly said golf courses should follow the new 2007 Golf BMP Manual when applying nutrients, it only takes one commissioner from one city or county to include all turf including golf under more stringent rules.

I could go into a long list of nutrient sources impacting the state's waters from agriculture, to wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, ill-designed storm water systems that discharge directly into these waters, animal waste (migrating and indigenous waterfowl are prolific poopers of nitrogen and phosphorus), grass clippings blown into the gutters and storm drains, falling leaves, pollen, and blossoms along with the nitrogen in the air deposited by rainfall. But fertilizer used on turfgrass is the main bulls eye when it comes to regulations.

Golf courses are said to be easy targets because they are so visible. Because they are visible they are also a leading tourism and resident recreation venue which has around a \$5 billion impact to the state's economy. This includes local property tax rates, and consider the tens of millions of dollars raised for local charities by outings on our courses. Don't forget the jobs and careers among the 72,000 in the state. Golf courses are great green spaces and wildlife habitats in urban and rural areas.

There are a lot of things about the golf industry worth fighting for. They will best be served if we all sing long and loud together and to a new audience of legislators and regulators. The time for choir practice is over.

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Recently two acquaintances from the world of golf passed away. One was Obie Lawson, 20 years my senior at age 85. The other was Rick Tatum, 17 years my junior. So if you're doing the math, that makes me a ripe young 65... old enough to know better, but young enough to keep trying.

When you have lived to my age you have seen a lot and in some cases seen too much. I have the advantage of perspective when it comes to reconciling people passing away at a

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ripe old age, but it is always a shock when a peer or one much younger is taken from us too soon.

Obie was one of the first suppliers I met once I became a superintendent in Central Florida. Obie was a sales rep for Woodbury Chemical and also did some work for Butch Gill and Innovative Turf Supply.

Obie went about his business with all the charm and demeanor of a southern gentleman always putting customer service first. He supported his clients individually, but he also was a steadfast supporter of the local chapters and the industry overall.

Rick had a very successful 20-year career in the Naples – Ft. Myers area. He was very competitive, but also very professional. He was outspoken and not shy at all about sharing or giving his opinion on any issue. But he was also not shy about helping others... from subordinates to his peers in the industry. As they say, he walked the talk. He helped me on several occasions by contributing to Hands On articles in The Florida Green.

Rick's personality was decried by many at his recent memorial service as "unique." He could be stubborn and demanding, and he gave no quarter in a debate. But he stepped up. He showed up. He rolled up his sleeves and got the job done, whatever it took. He didn't always win, but he was always going for the brass ring.

Our place on the circle of life isn't a guarantee of longevity, it is only our opportunity to maximize the quality of our lives and enjoy the company of others. Obie and Rick did just that and I am the better for knowing both of them. So long old friends til we meet again.