

# FIELD OBSERVATIONS

## 9/11 Reminds Me We Need to Stay Strong



By *Ralph K. Dain Jr.*,  
GCSAA Regional Representative Florida

As I am writing this piece, I remember what I was doing at this time exactly 10 years ago. I was the superintendent at Sailfish Point in Stuart. I had just returned to my office from checking the golf course. My mechanic told me a plane had hit the World Trade Center so we popped into the break room and watched what unfolded in horror and silence. I prayed for those impacted by this then and I continue to pray for those who are still impacted by this event today.

As days and weeks passed after Sept. 11, 2001, I remember thinking how important it is not to let opportunities pass you by and take advantage when you have the chance to do something meaningful. By

no means am I trying to equate speaking out on topics that impact our industry with the sacrifices of those who serve in our military, or police and fire departments. But we have made the decision to work in the golf industry, and there are opportunities to lead our profession when we have struggles or need individuals to speak up.

In my travels and interactions with the various chapters around the state, my focus has been the three GCSAA Action Alert Messages. We have been prompting our members to speak out on the issues regarding the NPDES Legislative Fix, Protection of the H2B Visa Program, and the inclusion of golf facilities in Natural Disaster Relief Funding. Your willingness to fill out the Action Alert Comments online has been well documented and has made an impact at all levels.

Recently we sent out a call to action with the idea of meeting with Senator Bill Nelson's staff at his eight district offices around the state. The request for volunteers was met by numerous individuals willing to participate. Chava McKeel, GCSAA Advocacy Department, prepared three great, one-page speaking-point documents to be used in these sessions.

This outreach effort received a great boost when Erin Boyd Wilder, FTGA Board member and representative for Sod Solutions, was able to organize a meeting with Senator Nelson's chief of staff, Pete Mitchell, in Tallahassee. Mark

Kann, FGCSA president, Joel Jackson, FGCSA executive director, Erin, and I met with Mr. Mitchell and were allowed a solid hour of interaction to express our thoughts on all three issues. We left after a very positive session with Mr. Mitchell with the belief that our messages will get in front of Senator Nelson.

Again, I realize these are not earth-shattering events, but within the industry where we all make a living, it is important to take the time to have our voices heard. It is often easy to get into a bunker mentality and just focus on the 18-36 holes for which we are responsible. If we remain silent and let others dictate policy with misinformation, there is a very real threat that you will wake up one morning, head to work, and have none of the tools currently at your disposal. After reading this, look around your facility and think about the number of items in your arsenal that could come under attack. There are many. Then boot up your computer and look to see if GCSAA has any new Action Alerts running and take a few minutes to help protect the way you do your job.

Silence is not always golden.

Until next time, I remain,

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