

## FIELD OBSERVATIONS



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

How many of you know which organization fosters sustainability through research, awareness, education, programs and scholarships for the benefit of golf course management professionals, golf facilities and the game? If you thought to yourself, "Self, I believe that is the EIFG!" Treat yourself to a hot fudge sundae or banana split after work. If you can identify what the acronym EIFG stands for, go ahead and take the rest of the day off and enjoy that ice cream treat now!!

EIFG is the Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of GCSAA. A number of programs which ultimately come back as benefits to you, our members, as well as golfers in general, are funded by money raised by the EIFG. When you donate to the EIFG, your tax-deductible donation joins others in:

- Fueling innovation through research
- Expanding knowledge of golf course management professionals through education
- Telling golf's story through advocacy and outreach
- Helping bright minds pursue their dreams through scholarships

In recent years, we have seen GCSAA member support of EIFG slip to only 10-12 percent of our total membership. EIFG is undergoing a re-branding effort

that was initially unveiled at this past year's GCSAA Conference and Show in Las Vegas.

We were also thrilled to receive a donation of \$1 million from The Kendrick B. Melrose Family Foundation which is supported by Ken Melrose, former CEO and chairman of the Toro Co.

With this donation, the Melrose Leadership Academy will be developed. Through an application and selection process, 20 individuals will be selected to participate, beginning in 2013. The program will take into account financial need, geography, facility size, requirements necessary to achieve GCSAA Class A status and other factors. While attending the GCSAA Conference and Golf Industry Show, participants will also be provided opportunities to network with GCSAA and other industry leaders.

The academy will offer education specific to risk management (health, safety, environmental compliance, operational efficiency, business and environmental stewardship.

While a donation of this magnitude infuses EIFG with, specific for education, it is imperative that these types of donors see that we have support from our members greater than 10 percent. Many of the chapters with whom I and other Field Staff have visited are hearing about our significant drive to reach a level of 51% member support by 2014. I know this sounds lofty, but the importance of the work being continued on your behalf in research, education, and advocacy cannot be stressed enough. We are not asking for \$1 million contributions (unless of course you feel so inclined!). We ask that you show your support at whatever level you feel comfortable, but please support to some extent.

I want to personally thank the Everglades GCSA for its continued annual support as well as acknowledge the Florida GCSA for its recent contribution commitment. In the coming months, I hope to add more

Florida Chapters and individual members to the recognition list.

We have also recently announced that the successful Rounds 4 Research program developed by Tim Kreger and the Carolinas GCSA will now be offered as a national campaign overseen by EIFG. We are excited about continuing the success already achieved at the regional level. We believe this provides us a great opportunity to assist local chapters around the country raise funds that can be utilized as research or advocacy and outreach efforts. For this program to find the same success, it will be important to have the local associations work with GCSAA and EIFG to secure rounds (foursomes) from golf facilities in the region that will ultimately be auctioned off to raise funds.

As it is being presented, 80 percent of the funds raised will be directed back to the local chapters. 20 % of the funds will help defray the cost of overseeing the program. It will also be critical to work with our friends at the CMAA and PGA and get complete industry support. I am confident our members and chapters in Florida will be positively impacted by this effort and look forward to working with all of you on this initiative.

I invite you to attend your upcoming chapter functions where I plan to provide greater details on this exciting development. I encourage you to visit the EIFG website at <http://www.eifg.org/> where you can learn more about all the programs we are working on as well as provide your support.

As I travel the region, I will be asking the questions I started this article with, and if you get the answers right, it will be like playing Little League baseball all over again. Let's all hit a home run and support EIFG and head to the Dairy Queen for an ice cream treat!!

For any questions or information contact me at: Phone 785.424.4306 or Email [rdain@gcsaa.org](mailto:rdain@gcsaa.org)