



## FIELD OBSERVATIONS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FLORIDA AND KANSAS



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

I just received an email from Joel Jackson reminding me my column is due today (June 4), so he can edit and submit it for publication. Unfortunately for me I'm boarding a flight to Kansas. Talk about an instant case of writer's block!

All my thoughts are crashing into one another, much like the passengers on this very turbulent flight. And if the person in front of me leans back any further, I will be able to identify them from their dental work. But, I must push on.

Today's turbulence reminds me of how the weather impacts all of us in our work and, in the case of the rash of Midwest tornadoes, our lives and property. I am grateful we have been spared the consequence of such severe storms.

Florida has experienced its share of work-related inclement weather thus far this year. I recently participated in the Palm Beach Chapter's Future of Golf Event. I was overwhelmed by the rainfall totals that superintendents reported. I heard ranges of 31-34 inches in April and May and around 12-14 inches in the week prior to that event.

These totals don't make national headlines. They do, however, have an impact on revenue, daily course grooming and our summer renovation and construction projects.

I remember from my superintendent days that too often our seasonal members didn't understand how weather events impacted or delayed course maintenance operations. Back

sand was so inconsistent!

I want you to know that the GCSAA and FGCSA exist to assist you with information that will help your golfers better understand the impacts and resulting conditions. GCSAA has been instrumental in conveying such information to the public in situations like Hurricane Sandy and the recent tornadoes in Oklahoma. We also have been able to offer members financial assistance as well.

I am proud of the way that our field staff has been able to observe firsthand the needs of our members and help gather funds or other resources that are needed to get them through the most difficult times. The assistance that our Northeast regional representative, Kevin Doyle, provided in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy was impressive.

That same support is available to all our members. If you find yourself in need of assistance, do not hesitate to reach to me, the GCSAA, or the FGCSA. Our mission is truly "to serve our members and advance their careers."

I am hopeful that we have a quiet summer

and everyone is able to complete his or her summer projects without undue delays. If you do run into some problems and need help, give me call!



in 2004, they did ask about the hundreds of missing trees thanks to Hurricanes Florence and Jeanne, but at the same time they couldn't understand why the bunker

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**REMEMBERING  
OUR HISTORY  
AND TRADITIONS**



**GREEN SIDE UP  
By JOEL JACKSON**

Tracing the history of the Florida Green brought back many memories of the people I've met during my career and also a sense of gratitude for those I didn't know but who were the trailblazers for our local and state associations. As time marches on, memories can fade and appreciation can be lost in the hustle and bustle of our modern, fast paced, high-tech world.

Progress is good, and it

provides many tools for us to use to be more productive and efficient, but not at the cost of losing our humanity in the industry. You can email, tweet and text to your heart's content, but that mode of communication is limited to fact exchanges. Conversations, handshakes, camaraderie and shared "live" experiences are essential for us as social beings

Lack of participation is plaguing many professional associations as people hunker down: whether job-scared, "too busy" (whatever that means these days), or lacking appreciation of what participation and giving back to your profession means.

There are any number of legitimate reasons for not making a chapter meeting, or volunteering to help out, but not for just not joining your professional association, missing every meeting never contributing, but always reaping the benefits of others' time and efforts to serve all of us without ever helping out themselves. Advocacy for sensible rules and regulations that govern our pest control, fertilizer and irrigation

operations comes to mind as a leading example of how the dedicated few are serving the many who won't even show up to a chapter meeting.

I think of the perhaps two-dozen people or so, who invested their time, talents and energy into our chapter publications over the years. Some are/were publication professionals and others just learned along the way. I improved my writing skills while working with our professional editor and journalist, Larry Kieffer, who was originally a newspaperman and also one of the early editors of Golfweek newspaper and, later, its spinoff — and eventual successor — magazine. I was a rank amateur photographer, but by hanging around Daniel Zelazek, who is so passionate about his craft, I couldn't help but pick up tips and tricks and basic knowledge that improved my picture taking skills for the magazine.

Getting involved in my local chapter, meeting people and making friendships that have lasted decades, helping our profession improve its image and reputation in the

regulatory world has been such a boost to my personal and professional abilities and confidence, I seriously don't understand why more people don't take advantage of those opportunities.

Getting involved in your profession (beyond just showing up to work) shows leadership and drive and other skills that should impress most course officials, since so many of them do the same thing in their professional/social groups. I'd be a proud club member if our superintendent were a director or officer of a professional association. One tip from my experience — whenever I attended a chapter outing, conference or trade show, I always dropped a note to my boss telling him something I learned that will help me do a better job on our course.

The "Good Old Days" aren't gone. They are right here, right now, and if you don't take a step to engage in the personal, professional and social relationships available by participating in your chapter, you are shortchanging yourself.



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