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WINTER 2013



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*Nancy Miller, CGCS  
President*

# The Florida Green

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**ON THE COVER:** *View from the 13th Green, Isla Del Sol Y&CC, St. Petersburg. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

## President's Message

A new year is on the horizon. The FGCSA Board of Directors has a full docket for the coming year. We met in early December to discuss the long-range plans of the Association. On the agenda were hiring an executive director, a review of publications, the Industry Partners program, Golf BMPs, Rounds 4 Research, government relations, chapter communications and membership dues.

As you know, Joel Jackson is cutting back his responsibilities to the FGCSA as of January 1 and will remain as director of communications. The board is revising the executive director job description and salary requirements. With Joel's assistance, the board will share the executive director's responsibilities until we can hire a professional. In conjunction with a new ED, we need to determine a business model that will carry us forward as a viable trade association. As you all are adapting to the new economic realities, our association must also adapt to fit "the new normal." Finding the right person to guide us will take some time and money. Funds may be needed to hire a search firm and set up the new executive director. It will take time to get through the process, make him/her familiar with the issues and find solutions. As a board, it is our duty to provide the association with a strong leader. A sound state association strengthens and unifies the local chapters. Publications are the backbone of the FGCSA. We depend on advertising sales as well as membership dues to fund the benefits that we provide our members and chapters. Advertisers are feeling the same economic pinch that golf courses are. The widespread use of digital media has had a significant effect on the impact of print media and we are examining all ways to strengthen our financial position. The Industry Partners program seems to be a good fit for our major sponsors, but we are looking for more sponsors. Small or large, we have an advertising package to fit any budget. Please contact Jennifer with prospective advertisers that service your course. We need your help!

The Golf BMP certification is progressing

well. If your chapter would like to sponsor a certification class and exam, please contact Jennifer and we'll set one up. The current mission of the FGCSA is to unify the Florida golf course superintendent chapters. A large part of our unification mission these days is governmental advocacy. As a group, our voices are heard louder and more clearly than as individuals. When local individuals speak up to be heard concerning local ordinances, we will group together to support you. While I was trying to decide on a personal note to add to my message, I was bemoaning to a friend that I was stuck finding a topic. He suggested that since it's the holiday season I write a letter about thanks. As he listed the things in his life that he's thankful for, I caught on. You've seen a hundred Hallmark Christmas movies and read a thousand sentimental holiday books, poems, cards and stories. No matter what our religious beliefs, this season infuses our spirits with hope. Hope for a peaceful world that brings our military men and women home for good. Hope that our loved ones are healthy and safe. Hope that our own lives will be better, more prosperous, and happier next year. But we also should look back with gratitude on the year that passed. As golf course superintendents, we make our livings executing our passions: fresh air, Florida sunshine, warm temperatures. Literally and figuratively, we are growing a greener world. Our workplace is a living, breathing holiday card. So, take a minute to fish, golf, sit back, crack open a beer, uncork a bottle of wine, sip a hot toddy or relax for just a minute and count the good things in your life. I wish you Happy Holidays.



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# Wrapping up 2012



*Representatives of the major golf equipment companies discussed the future and implication of the new EPA Tier 4 regulations on engine emissions at the Suncoast-West Coast GCSA joint meeting at the September meeting. From left: John Deere's Kreg Kinney, Toro's Grant Young and Jacobsen's Chuck Grief. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**Suncoast/West Coast Joint Meeting**

The Suncoast GCSA hosted the Florida West Coast chapter at the Ritz-Carlton GC in Bradenton for an educational session on Tier 4 engine emissions with representatives of Toro, John Deere and Jacobsen on hand to discuss the coming changes to golf course equipment. Following lunch, both chapters competed in a Ryder Cup-style match for the 2nd Annual "Beyond the Bridge" Cup. The team scores ended up tied; therefore the Suncoast retained the cup it won last year in St. Petersburg.



*From left: Mark Todd, President, Suncoast GCSA and Kevin Sunderman, Vice President, West Coast GCSA shake after the two teams tied in the tournament, and Suncoast retained the trophy for another year. Photo by Joel Jackson*

**FTGA Conference**

This year's FTGA Conference and Show was the site for the second Golf BMP Training and Testing Session. The session was well attended and the number of Golf BMP-certified superintendents continues to climb steadily. During the conference, Ralph Dain, GCSAA Regional Representative for Florida, presented the FTGA's highest service honor award the "Wreath of Grass," to Greg Pheneger from the John's Island Club in Vero Beach.

*Long time Florida golf course superintendent and current GCSAA Regional Representative Ralph Dain, left, introduced and presented John's Island Director of Golf Operations and FTGA Past President Greg Pheneger with the 2012 FTGA Wreath of Grass Award at the FTGA Conference and Show in Orlando in late September. Photo Courtesy of Leading Edge Communications.*



### South Florida GCSA

For the past 28 years, the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association has sponsored an annual golf tournament that benefits the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children Florida Regional Office, located in Lake Park. This year's tournament, held at the Fort Lauderdale Country Club Oct. 19, raised \$25,000, bringing the 28-year total to more than \$392,000 to support local programs and services.



The SFGCSA presented a \$25,000 check to Nancy McBride, national safety director for Missing and Exploited Children. From left: Back Row: Bryan Singleton, SFGCSA vice president; Billy Entwistle, Joe Pantaleo, Marcus Prevatte, Ricky Reeves, SFGCSA President. Front Row: Lissa Donald-Minus, SFGCSA association manager and Nancy McBride. Photo courtesy of the SFGCSA.

### North Florida

Now that GCSAA has added a fifth member to the golf teams participating in the National GCSAA Golf Championship in February, Florida needed an official fifth event to allow members to qualify for the team. The North Florida GCSA stepped up and created the North Florida Fall Classic, a two-day event of education, networking and golf. This year the event was held at the Omni Resort on Amelia Island. The education session was a success with speakers Todd Lowe, USGA Green Section; David Dougherty, International Sport Turf Research Center; Gary Grigg of Grigg Brothers Fertilizer; Paul Vermuelin of the PGA Tour Agronomy staff and Tom Vlach, superintendent of TPC of Sawgrass. The trophy (Crash Cup) for the golf tournament the next day was named in honor of Edward "Crash"

Hall, one of the founding members of the North Florida chapter. Scott Scamehorn, CGCS from the Mountain Lake GC in Lake Wales shot a respectable 70 to take home the trophy and win the first-ever NGCSA Fall Classic.



Crash Cup Tournament Chairman Jay McCord, left, presented Mountain Lake GC Superintendent Scott Scamehorn with the very first Crash Cup trophy. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Speakers at the NFGCSA Fall Classic education session were, from left: TPC @ Sawgrass Director of Agronomy Tom Vlach, USGA Green Section Agronomist Todd Lowe, Grigg Bros. Foliar VP Gary Grigg and PGA Tour Director of Competition Agronomy Paul Vermeulen. Not pictured: David Dougherty, CEO of the International Sports Turf Research Center. Photo by Joel Jackson.



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**West Coast**

The Feather Sound Golf Club hosted the West Coast GCSA's 2012 Bud Quandt Tournament Oct. 8. The event managed to finish before an afternoon storm drenched the course. This event is the primary fundraiser for turf research and charitable donations made by the chapter. This year a traveling team from the Suncoast Chapter won the event. In an act of pure class, the champs donated their winnings back to the fundraising cause.



*The Suncoast traveling team, from left — Bill Tyde, Robby Robertson, Dan Haulbein and Nick Kearns — took Low Gross honors at the WCGCSA Bud Quandt Tournament at Feather Sound Oct. 8. Photo by Joel Jackson.*



*The first- and second-place teams in the annual EGCSA CREW Tournament were captained by Brian Beckner, left, and Kevin Leo. Can you guess who came in first place? Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**Central Florida**

The CFGCSA's Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot Open at Grand Cypress moved from August to December this year. Superintendents and vendors from all over Florida attended and witnessed Jason Regan from Boca Pointe CC win the Crowfoot Trophy and the last spot on the FGCSA Golf Team going to the GC-SAA Championship in San Diego. Local superintendent Kevin Rotti, a CFGCSA past president received the Larry Kamphaus Award for service and dedication to family, job and community.



*From left: Tom Alex, Crowfoot Open host, presented the 2012 Larry Kamphaus Award to long time Central Florida superintendent, Kevin Rotti. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**JANUARY**

- Jan 11 FTGA, Tampa
- Jan 11 Suncoast Vendor Appreciation Day, Plantation GC
- Jan 12 FTGA, Ft. Myers
- Jan 17 FTGA, Ocala
- Jan 18 SRGCSA Meeting, Continental GC
- Jan 18 SFGCSA Meeting, Crandon Park GC
- Jan 25-28 PGA Merchandise Show, Orlando
- Jan 28 UF Turf Club Golf Tournament, Gainesville

**FEBRUARY**

- Feb 7 FTGA, Orlando
- Feb 8 FTGA, Lake Worth
- Feb 8 SRGCSA Meeting, Williston Highlands GC
- Feb 9 FTGA, Plantation
- Feb 21 FTGA, Milton
- Feb 23 FTGA, Jacksonville
- Feb 24-25 GCSAA Golf, Palm Springs
- Feb 27-Mar 3 GCSAA GIS, Las Vegas

**MARCH**

- Mar 1 FGCSA Reception, Mirage, Las Vegas
- Mar 20 EGCSA Education & Dinner Meeting, Pelican Bay
- Mar 22 SFGCSA Turf Expo, Ft. Lauderdale IFAS REC
- Mar 22 Golf BMP Training & Exam Session, UF/IFAS, Citra
- Mar 29 Suncoast Scramble, TBA

**APRIL**

- Apr 5 EGCSA Spring Symposium, Naples
- Apr 16 SRGCSA Envirotron Classic, World Woods



*Jason Regan, superintendent of the Boca Pointe CC, shot a 75 to win the 2012 Crowfoot Open and a spot on the FGCSA golf team. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

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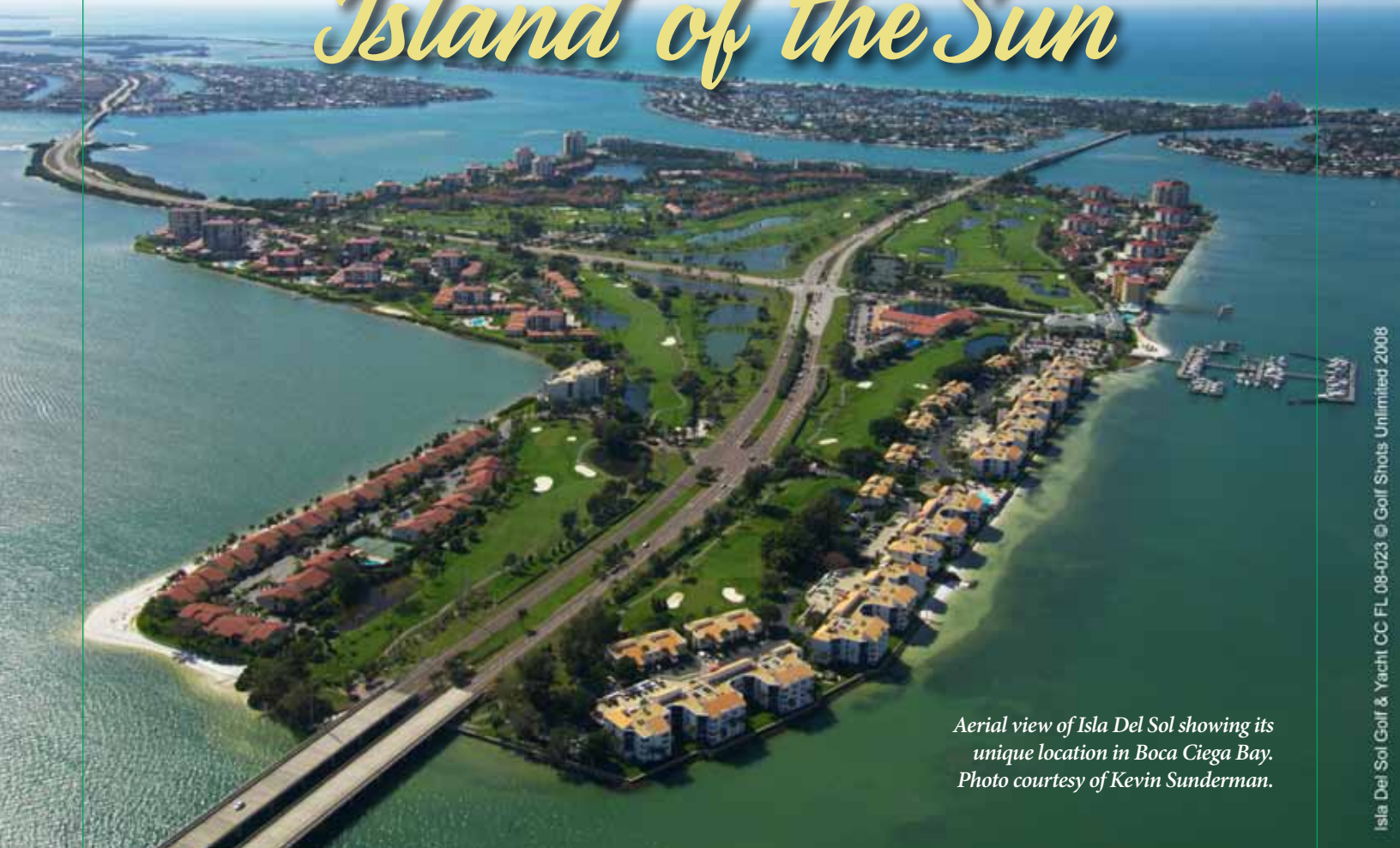
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# Isla Del Sol - Island of the Sun



*Aerial view of Isla Del Sol showing its unique location in Boca Ciega Bay. Photo courtesy of Kevin Sunderman.*

Isla Del Sol Golf & Yacht CC FL 08-023 © Golf Shots Unlimited 2008

In the late 1970s, the state of Florida dredged and filled some low, marshy areas in Boca Ciega Bay to provide some anchor points for the Pinellas Bayway complex to provide land access to the southern St. Petersburg Gulf beaches, Tierra Verde, Mullet Key and Ft. De Soto Park at the entrance to Tampa Bay. Isla Del Sol's front golf course is a great green space to balance the high-density housing, and each homeowner has either a golf course or a water view. The historic Don Cesar Hotel



*View of the 8th hole from behind the green. The walk bridge had to be rebuilt after Tropical Storm Debby flooded the course with 17 inches of rain. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

in Pass-a-Grille Beach, built in 1928, is also in full view less than a mile away as you drive from the 11th green to the 12th tee.

The General Electric Company negotiated with the state to do some additional dredging to create some larger islands big enough to develop home sites and a golf course and the Isla Del Sol Yacht & Country Club and a number of condominium communities were born. The Isla Del Sol course was built and opened in 1977 and our host



superintendent, Kevin Sunderman has called it home since 2005. Kevin actually lives in the Bradenton area so he traverses the Sunshine Skyway Bridge twice a day in his commute to and from work.

I wonder if he's ever thought about using a boat?

In 2007, the TifDwarf greens were converted to SeaIsle Supreme paspalum and Kevin loves the grass. It tolerates the salty air and 100 percent effluent irrigation water, and hardly ever goes off color in the cooler months. The only challenge with the paspalum is managing the paspalum/bermudagrass interface around the greens, which requires vigilant edging and runner control.

Because of the temperature-moderating influence of the bay, the tees are the only turf areas that Sunderman overseeds during the cool season to provide protection for these high-traffic areas. The seed generally goes out in late November to get established before the busy winter golf season gets into full swing.

But even every paradise has issues. I thought the biggest challenge might be the soil profile from the fines dredged up, but according to Sunderman, it is the irrigation system and water availability. The course irrigation system is interconnected with the condo irrigation systems. They are all directly fed from the treatment plant.

The course has two booster pumps to maintain proper operating pressures, but with the demand of all the systems, The course may irrigate a full wall-to-wall cycle only two days a week. The rest of the time, they irrigate on a prioritized, as-needed basis. Add in lower water generated during non-peak seasons and precise irrigation management becomes the key management factor.

Sunderman attempts to coordinate with all the condo associations to develop a workable BMP plan, but he gets very

## SUPERINTENDENT FACTS

### Meet Kevin Sunderman

**Originally from:**  
New London, Ohio.

**Family:** Wife Melani. Son Trent (13) and daughter Elise (10).

**Education:** BS degree from "The" Ohio State University with a major in Turfgrass Science

**Employment history:** 1998 – 2000 Superintendent at Whetstone GC, Marion, OH; 2000-02 Assistant Superintendent (AS) at Snee Farm CC, Mt. Pleasant, SC; 2002 AS at East Lake Woodlands, Clearwater CC; 2002-03 Investment representative for Edward Jones Investments, Bradenton; 2003-05 AS at TPC Prestancia, Sarasota; 2005 – present Superintendent/Director of Grounds Isla Del Sol Yacht & Country Club.

**Professional affiliations/awards:** 12-year member of the GCSAA. Served as the Florida West Coast voting delegate in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Served on the FWCGCSA board since 2006, currently the vice president. I am also a member of the Florida GCSA board since 2008 and currently the Vice President of that organization as well.

**Personal philosophy of work:** Take the time to consider all sides of an issue and in the end do what is right. Only fight the battles worth fighting. Treat everyone with respect, especially your employees. If they know you sincerely care, they will always be there for you.

**Personal/Memorable Moments:** Every moment spent with my family. We are very close and do everything together. Knowing that time doesn't stand still, I treasure every moment and take it all in. I'm also very proud to be an alumnus of The Ohio State University. I have a deep sense of pride and belonging that goes way beyond being a sports fan. "How firm thy friendship, O-Hi-O"

**Hobbies and Interests:** My number one hobby is grilling. I make all my own sauces, rubs and marinades. I also dabble in guitar playing, mostly blues and classic rock. Avid sports fan of college football and the Tampa Bay Rays.



**KEVIN SUNDERMAN.**

*Photo by Joel Jackson.*



*View from the 3rd Green includes the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and Boca Ciega Bay. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

spotty cooperation from the various contract landscape companies.

The cultural programs at Isla Del Sol are in keeping with good stewardship practices most superintendents employ these days. Sunderman has a target of 2.5 pounds of N and 20 pounds of K per year on the greens. He makes four wall-to-wall, slow-release fertilizer applications per year on the rest of the course. The greens are double-aerified at 2x2-inch spacing twice in the spring and rolled and lightly verticut as often as possible. He uses 12 ounces of Primo per acre weekly in season. Chronic dry hot spots on the course



*Accessible approach to the par 5, 540 yard, 4th hole. Photo by Joel Jackson.*



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## TOURNAMENT

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It takes people to make all this happen and Sunderman has two assistants who help him oversee the daily operation and also serve as the spray and irrigation technicians. Fernando Collazo has been at Isla Del Sol for 24 years and Chris Hewitt for 14 years. Equipment Manager Larry Jones has six years service.

Sunderman, originally from New London, Ohio is a proud Buckeye Turfgrass Science graduate and has been in the business for 14 years. He has managed courses in Ohio and South Carolina before settling into the Florida west coast region with service at East Lake Woodlands, TPC at Prestancia before coming to Isla Del Sol.

A devoted family man, Sunderman left the turf business for a brief time ten years ago to take a position with Edward Jones Investments that offered a higher salary, which was needed to provide for his growing family at the time. Cold-call sales pitches were not personally very satisfying, but he did learn a lot more about working effectively with people, and he brought that business sense with him when he came back to golf course management less than a year later.

Through it all, his wife Melani was his anchor and biggest cheerleader. They met when Kevin was the assistant superintendent and she was the catering director at the Snee Farm Country Club in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. Family time is Sunderman's greatest passion, so his golf game is sketchy at best.

In his "family time" Sunderman is a self-confessed outdoor cooking aficionado. In less than a year of doing recent cover stories, Sunderman is the second "Grill Monster" I've come across. The first was Ricky Reeves at the Miami Beach GC. Reeves confessed to owning five grills and Sunderman makes all his own

## SUNDERMAN FUN FACTS

**Vehicle:** 2008 Honda Ridgeline

**The last good movie I saw:** Skyfall

**I stay home to watch:** Ohio State Football

**What I've been reading:** The Big Miss by Hank Haney

**Favorite meal:** Anything I cook on the grill or in the smoker

**Prized possessions:** My wedding band. I've never taken it off

**Personal heroes:** My wife, father and mother

**I'm better than anyone else when it comes to:** Grilling (*except maybe for Ricky Reeves*)

**Nobody knows that I:** Was my high school valedictorian.

**If I could do it over:** I would never lose my temper (*ever*). It doesn't happen often

**My fantasy is:** To work because I want to, not because I have to. (*I'd still be doing the same thing.*)

**The one thing I can't stand:** People without direction or drive. Figure out what you need or want to do and get it done.

**Most humbling experience:** My first spring overseeding transition of greens as a superintendent.

**The words that best describe me:** Sincere, determined.

**My dream foursome would be:** My dad and two brothers.

**My most amazing/lucky/important golf shot:** My first hole-in-one. I was playing alone and had to shout at the group on the next tee to be witnesses and go look in the cup before I got to the green.



*The early heron gets the fish! Photo by Joel Jackson.*

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saucers, rubs and seasonings. No Kraft or Sweet Baby Ray's touches his grill.

I think we need to have a cook-off between these two at one of our state events.

After dinner, you might find Sunderman picking up a guitar and playing a little blues or classic rock. He says his equipment manager's son is a professional musician and his own 13-year old son, Trent, isn't too shabby either. Sunderman admitted, "I like to perform in front of people. I'm not great but I love the rush. Sometimes I think Trent and I could practice a little more and maybe do some father-son outdoor patio gigs at a restaurant."

A generational leadership transition is taking place across our industry and our associations. It will be Sunderman's talents as a leader

in that generation that will be needed to help the FGCSA serve its members and remain a meaningful voice in the Florida golf industry.



View down the 1st hole from the putting green and tee complex. Photo by Joel Jackson.

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## ISLA DEL SOL YACHT &amp; COUNTRY CLUB



*Isla Del Sol Maintenance Staff. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**Location:** St. Petersburg, FL

**No. of Holes:** 18 Yardage: 6,307  
Par: 71 Slope & Rating: 130/69.1

**Ownership:** Member owned.

**Playing Policy:** Private. Some limited public play in the summer.

**Designed by:** Mark Mahannah.

**Opened:** 1997

**Management Team:** Club Manager Robert Rankin; Head Golf Professional Fred Curtis; Director of Grounds Kevin Sunderman

**Projects:** Converted greens from TifDwarf to SeaIsle Supreme Paspalum in 2007. We conduct progressive annual renovations of tees, bunkers and bulkheads and landscaped areas. In 2009 we did a total upgrade to all clubhouse landscaping.

**Total property acres:** 105. Acreage under maintenance: 100

**Greens:** Turf Type: SeaIsle Supreme.

Average size (sq.ft.): 6,200. Acres: 3.0

Height of Cut (Bench setting - .070 to .115 with goal in the field of .100 - .115.

Overseeding: none. Green speed goals:

Average 9.5 depending on season or event.

**Tees:** Turf Type: Celebration bermudagrass some 419 and SeaIsle Supreme. Acres: 2.0. HOC: .375 - .500" in season, .500 in summer. Overseeding (type & rate): Perennial ryegrass @ 400# per acre.

**Fairways:** Turf Type: Tifway 419. Total acres: 20. HOC: .500 - .600"

Overseeding: None

**Roughs:** Turf Type: Tifway 419 Total acres: 50. HOC: 1.25".

Overseeding: None

**Bunkers:** Number of bunkers 54. Sand type: 37M Machine raked; Equipment: John Deere 1200H

**Landscaped and naturalized areas/beds:** One naturalized area right side of first hole due to constant shade and cart traffic from teeing area. Multiple accent and functional landscaped beds.

**Waterways/Lakes/Ponds:** Total number: 23. Acres: 20. Lake maintenance by Lake Masters.

**Irrigation:** 100 percent direct piped effluent water. Two 75 hp VFD booster pumps by Citrus Seven Pump Services. Controls: Rainbird PAR 24 retrofitted to a

Nimbus II central controller. Heads: 1,100/75-ft. spacing. No fertigation system.

**Water Restrictions:** No restrictions by ordinance. Submit water-use BMP plans during times of low supply. We share the irrigation water with all the condominium associations. Due to shared water we can only irrigate wall-to-wall on Tuesday and Fridays. Other five days limited to about 150,000 gallons.

**Water Management/Conservation practices:** Numerous detailed "Hot Spot" programs. Utilize hand watering. Use wetting agents.

**Staff:** Total including superintendent: 16. Schedule: 36 hours straight time. Weekend crews gets 42 hours. Additional payroll for summer months used for either temporary workers, overtime or additional employees.

**Key Staff:** Assistant Fernando Collazo, 24 years with IDYCC; Assistant Chris Hewitt, 14 years at IDYCC; Equipment Technician Larry Jordan (6 years).

**Meetings/ Communications:** Daily assistant meetings. Monthly or special Club Department Head meetings.

*Top: Early morning on the 10th hole at Isla Del Sol. Photo by Joel Jackson*



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*The normally stately Great Blue Heron is all fluffed up by the windy day.*

*Waterways plus fish equals ospreys.*



# *Feathered Friends on the Fairways*

Photos by Joel Jackson

*The Bird of Paradise plant behind the crotons looks like tall heron in the bushes.*



*Cormorants hunker down in the chilly October breeze.*



*This Great Blue let me get really close.*



*Roseate Spoonbills like the Tampa Bay area.*



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# Sand Solutions

Finer-textured turf varieties are commonplace on greens these days and the old standby topdressing products and methods have had to change as well to accommodate good turf management. Higher golfer expectations also have required more attention to detail and esthetic considerations and the age of colored divot sand was born. But the tides of change ebb and flow and right now they're ebbing and cost is more of concern during these challenging times. We asked superintendents to chime in on the methods and products they are currently using.

## Bill Davidson, CGCS, Country Club of Naples,

Greens' topdressing sands as fine as talc powder! I think this is an issue that came about in the age of ultralow mowing and trying to find a way to get the sand into the canopy. I used to mow my greens at .100-inch or lower and constantly apply sand and then pick it up with mowers.

Due to the dense, tight-cut canopy, a lot of people – including myself – started looking for finer, screened sands to incorporate into the turf to get the benefits of doing such. I was using sand called “ideal” sand. It is dried and screened sand. Now, with newer programs of mowing higher and rolling more, I no longer worry about sand incorporation into the putting surface.

I mow my greens at .125-inch year-around and no longer buy special screened sands in the winter months when the canopy tightens up. I use 200-seive sand in the summer and 180-seive sand after the last aerification.

Divot sand preference varies widely as well. I no longer buy the green-dyed sand because the green latex colorant used to dye the sand never degrades. I've dug up



*Topdressing materials and methods are changing with the times. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

old range tees after 10 years of green sand being used to fill divots and the colorant is just as vibrant as the day the divots were filled.

In replacing the green-dyed sands, I use sand that has been blended with a screened compost to darken the sand. I believe the darker sand attracts more heat and thus stimulates recovery better in the

winter, and the compost helps the sand hold more water and nutrients as well. I've heard of people using sand dyed black, but my fear is the sand colorant will have the same fate in the soil as the green and be around way too long.

My divot sand sizing is whatever they have left over to blend with the compost. It's usually around a 220-sieve size, but I really don't care. I just want as inexpensive a sand as I can get – the Celebration bermudagrass will grow through concrete.

## Kevin Sunderman, Isla Del Sol Yacht & Country Club

We use green sand only for divots. It is straight sand with no amendments. I proposed using natural color sand in the summer as a cost saver, but the members vetoed the suggestion, preferring the green sand look.

Natural colored sand is used for all topdressing. I continue

to topdress with straight sand that closely matches the greens mix in particle size. I emphasize a lot of big holes during aerification and do my best to incorporate as much sand as possible during this time.

While it doesn't eliminate the need for light topdressing throughout the year, I have been able to cut back these applications and still have a tight canopy that



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doesn't scalp. Fewer light topdressings result in consistently sharp reels providing better cuts and healthier grass. Control of thatch and organic matter buildup seems to be better under this program than my older, more conventional program.

While the concept behind dark topdressing makes sense, I have only used one load with inconclusive results. My warmer location on the water may reduce the need for or significance of the dark topdressing.

We do not have the luxury of using dry bagged or silo-stored sand for topdressing. When topdressing during times of play we make sure to apply rates low enough where the sand can be incorporated with light irrigation, a greens roller or by dragging with a cocoa mat.

**Ricky Reeves,  
Miami Beach Golf Club**

At Miami Beach GC we use a 304 Max-and/Humate blend for divot filling and straight 304 Maxand for light topdressing.

Regarding colored sand: The way I see it all sand will layer unless needle tine or some other sort of incorporation is done with the application. I do not like seeing a

layer of green sand in my greens.

For regular seasonal aerifications we use 304 Maxand to help hold moisture. Down south we don't worry about cold too much. I don't like the dark color for top dressing.

We don't use special dried sands. When doing light topdressings, we just get out in front of play and keep a good pace and water in if possible.

Due to budget restraints I may be forced to use different sand from what my greens were built with. It's a city-owned course and government seems not to understand the science, just the dollars. There are times I will use a different sand like a DOT 329 for better drainage and air movement when too many fines have settled in the upper 1-3-inch root zone.

**Eric Ruha, Shadow Wood CC**

We fill our members' cart sand buckets with green dyed sand of the 90/10 mix (the cart staff does it). We also use this sand on the par 3 tees and practice area divots.

We do not use green-dyed sand for broadcast applications on greens in the

winter. We use Davenport or 150-mesh sand that is neutral in color, applied with a Widespin topdresser pulled by a small Kubota tractor. By applying it lightly two or three times a month, the neutral color does not make people say, "Wow, you used white sand!"

We also pencil-tine in the winter as weather and conditions allow. Topdressing lightly before this process is standard and then we roll-brush the sand in with a Salsco roller. We usually roll the next day without greens mower brush kit. We do not mow the next day. During aerification in the summer we use 180-mesh straight sand to fill holes. We typically aerify greens 3-4 times per course with 3/4" or 3/8" hollow tines to 4" depth.

If we have stressed areas in the winter, (usually greens perimeter-cut areas or high traffic areas on specific greens with limited entry and exit points), we use dried, bagged green sand mixed with Profile®. This is applied very lightly with a rotary walk spreader. We have just purchased Maxand (sand) that is supposed to have coatings that provide plant benefits but we have not used it yet.

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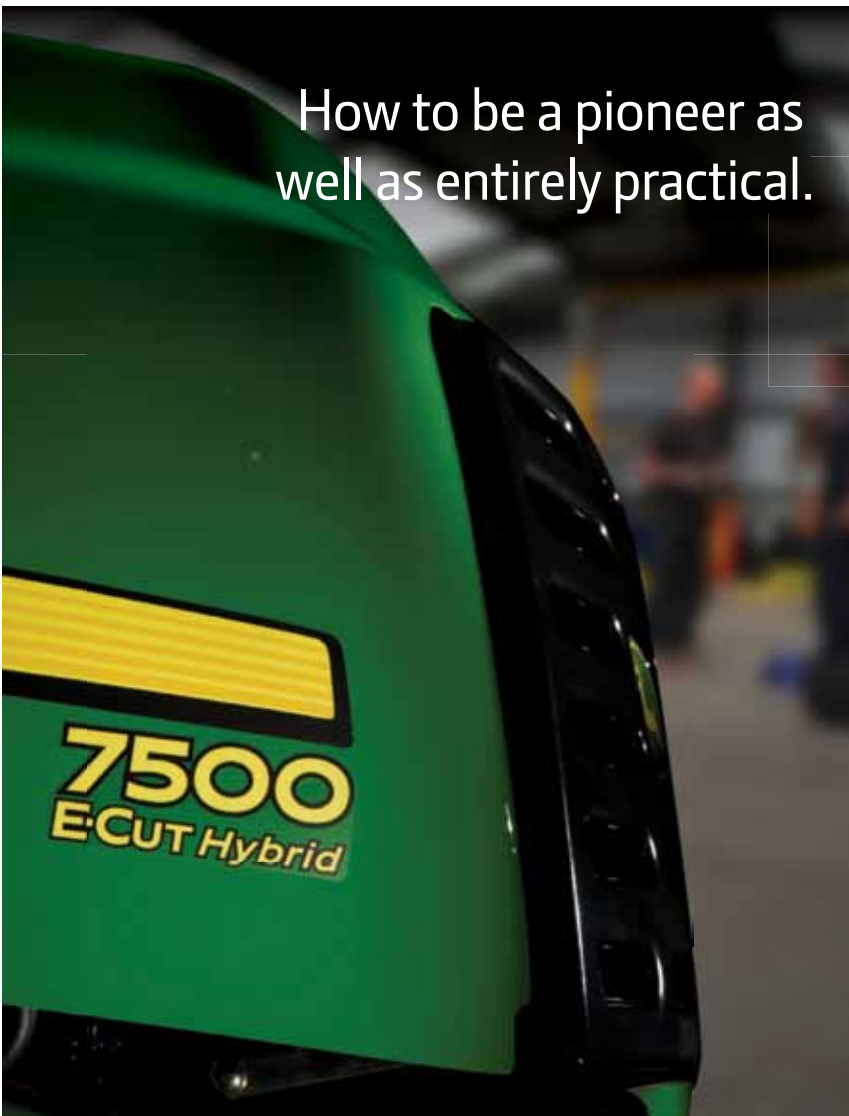
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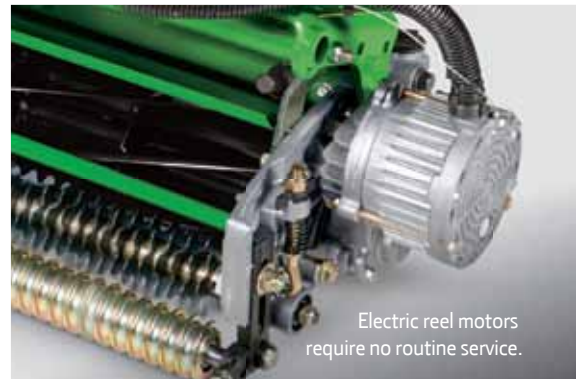
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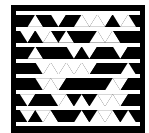
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# Manage Cart Traffic Proactively

*Proactive traffic control can protect turf during the slow-growth winter season. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

*By Todd Lowe*  
*USGA Senior Agronomist, Florida Region*

A recent cold front came through our region and brought Chamber of Commerce weather conditions in most areas. While it is still considered warm for some migrating snowbirds, year-round Florida residents have appreciated the break from cool weather. Many golf facilities report that play has nearly doubled in the past week and this trend will continue as snowfall in northern states pushes the annual migration of golfers southward.

Cooler temperatures have slowed turf growth in Florida. This has had a positive impact in reducing mowing frequency and clipping production, as the turf is not growing as aggressively as it was several weeks ago. Prolonged low soil temperatures will eventually cause

turf growth to cease and bring with it unsightly conditions, especially in high-traffic areas.

The turf on most golf courses is still quite green and healthy at this time

**Preventing turf damage is much more effective at maintaining good turf quality than trying to encourage turf recovery once it becomes damaged from cart traffic.**

of year, but it is important to pay close attention to traffic patterns and be proactive in traffic diversion with ropes and stakes to maintain good golf course aesthetics. Preventing turf damage is much more effective at maintaining good turf quality than trying to encourage turf recovery once

it becomes damaged from cart traffic.

In addition to ropes and stakes, a rotating “resting hole” program has been effective at reducing turf wear from cart traffic. With this program,

holes Nos. 1 and 10 are deemed “cart path only” on week one, holes Nos. 2 and 11 on week two and so on. Proper signage and enforcement are necessary to make this policy effective.

At the end of the day, we must realize that sometimes we are our own worst enemy when it comes to turf damage from traffic. Just like we need traffic lights and stop signs, so too are traffic protocols needed on golf courses.

For more information contact: Todd Lowe, [tlowe@usga.org](mailto:tlowe@usga.org) or 941-828-2625

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# Golf's Use of Water - Solutions for a More Sustainable Game



*Tim Hiers, CGCS from the Old Collier GC discussed irrigating with brackish water.*



*Bob Farren discussed the restoration of Pinehurst No. 2 to the original single-row irrigation design.*



*Mark Esoda from Georgia talked about the positive results from working with water regulators.*

*By Joel Jackson,  
FGCSA Executive Director*

We have been dealing with water-quality issues in Florida the past few years in the form of fertilizer ordinances, but there is a larger, more sinister, threat looming for our industry in the form of availability of water for our needs. We think of Florida as having an abundant water supply – and we do, compared to some regions. However, the demands on easy, inexpensive water are growing and we need to make sure

we are doing everything possible to minimize our use and maximize our water conservation.

I had the privilege of representing the Florida GCSA at the USGA's Water Summit meeting Nov. 6-7 in Dallas. Water is the most critical resource in managing a golf course. A roster of 18 speakers from across the country addressed more than 100 attendees representing the golf industry and water regulatory agencies. I wanted to share some of their comments to spur you to start thinking very seriously about how to effectively manage your

water resources to keep your course viable and your job secure.

Let's start with the opening statement from Mike Davis, executive director of the USGA.

*... Water is an extraordinarily valuable resource, and the pressures on water supplies are increasing in many areas. The drought conditions experienced by much of the country over the past few years have further heightened the visibility of these conditions.* (Ed. Note – Trends out west have a history of moving east, so as California, Nevada and Arizona go,

so often goes the rest of the country).

*“At the same time, golf course irrigation is a necessity, which means golf courses must use water in the most responsible manner possible. When done so, the game contributes not only to the enjoyment and well being of participants, but also to the economic and environmental health of local communities.*

*“In addition to helping courses adjust to their areas’ specific environmental conditions and challenges through the Turf Advisory Service, the USGA has invested in scientific research to develop grasses that require less water. Moving forward, we are committed to continuing to help courses efficiently utilize every drop of water that is available for irrigation.*

*“Part of that mission is this summit, which has convened experts in water resource management, golf course management and scientific research. Working together, we can identify innovative solutions to preserve the game’s sustainability...*

Here are some comments from the regulatory and activist side of the issue:

Veronica Blette, chief of the Water Sense Branch, EPA:

*The EPA and other federal agencies and businesses are looking at potential risks associated with water shortages and lack of access to clean and safe supplies of water. It is exciting to see the golf industry take the issue*

*seriously. Golfers expect lush and green conditions and homeowners want their yards to look green too. We all need to shift our focus to be more sustainable as the primary goal.*

Ann Dickinson is president and CEO of the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AEF). She has an impressive resume of work in the water conservation field, so it was a bit of a surprise to me how astonished she was when Greg Lyman from the GCSAA was showing a national Golf Water Use pie chart which indicated that golf’s use of public potable water supply nationally is 19 percent; the figure she had assumed or used was 45 percent. In Florida, only courses on some of the barrier islands used city water. It’s too darn expensive. Most coastal courses are using reclaimed or brackish water for irrigation.

From the superintendent ranks, our own Tim Hiers, CGCS from the Old Collier Club in Naples described the mandated use of brackish water for his course. There was no access granted to fresh water sources, so Hiers has become an “expert” in managing seashore paspalum turfgrass on a salt water diet. He’s also had to learn ecosystem management and find salt-tolerant landscape plants (halophytes) to use around the course perimeter. The FGCSA, with Hiers as the host, hosts a stop on the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association’s

week-long annual Spring Regulator Tour of EPA, DEP, DACS and Water Management regulators every March. This kind of outreach is essential to educate regulators about real world situations.

Bob Farren, director of golf courses and grounds maintenance at Pinehurst gave an interesting account of the Bill Coore/Ben Crenshaw restoration of the historic Pinehurst No. 2 to its original design and irrigation coverage. Farren said, “We reduced the total number of irrigated turf acres from 90 to 50 and the number of heads on the course from 1150 to 450. The ‘old school’ centerline irrigation in the fairways now determines the strategic lines of the course.”

This was an extreme case of “naturalizing” areas of the golf course, but it is a fact that, by removing turf from out-of-play areas and creating naturalized areas, you can conserve water resources, and reduce water and pumping costs and all the other fertilizer, pesticide and labor costs. Those are good things for the shaky bottom line these days.

Next Mark Esoda, CGCS from the Atlanta Athletic Club told the story of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents campaign to incorporate BMPs into the state’s water regulations. At the time, Georgia had banned all irrigation of fairways and restricted greens and

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**“Golf also has a public perception problem. ‘What can we do to help conserve water that will prove we are good managers/stewards of the resource?’**

tees to just a few days a week.

“Regulators want help doing their jobs,” Esoda said. “Golf also has a public perception problem. In Georgia, we had to ask the hard question: ‘What can we do to help conserve water that will prove we are good managers/stewards of the resource?’ Change is difficult, but the golf industry stepped up to prove the world wrong (by) using a self-policing BMP program, stepping up to work with agencies on various committees and introducing educational pieces. The result is increased positive

awareness and improved water conservation.”

In Florida, we have to work with five water-management districts and we are, to varying degrees of success. Overall we have partnered with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to create a Golf BMP Manual, which covers all phases of golf course management including a chapter on irrigation. Your challenge is to practice those BMPs and improve your irrigation management program and document it so we can show our proactivity in water conservation. One step would be to take the new

voluntary Golf BMP certification exam to document your commitment to environmental stewardship.

Florida is not immune to the coming real or perceived shortages of water supplies. We do have access to more water than some regions in the country. In southern Nevada, Doug Bennett, conservation manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, says the annual rainfall averages one to four inches per year, and the average annual water bill for courses out there is around \$1 million a year! Forced by those kinds of numbers and the



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inception of the recent droughts, courses have converted more than 40 million square feet of non-essential turfgrass to water-efficient landscape designs. Collectively, these conversions are saving more than 2.2 billion gallons of water annually.

I leave you with this challenge: Make 2013 the year you begin to take water conservation very seriously. Make sure your club has a water conservation plan from the clubhouse to maintenance facility. Consider creating a drought plan for the course. Experiment with voluntary cutbacks in run times and map the course to show where you can easily and regularly cut back the amount of water used to keep the course in acceptable playing condition. You'll save money and water, which are both critical these days.



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# FIELD OBSERVATIONS

## Membership Success with Recruitment and Retention



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

Just a little over four years ago, I was invited to GCSAA headquarters to audition for the part of Regional Representative for Florida. Some in this region may say I am still auditioning or that I must be the understudy!! My assignment was to make a presentation on the topic of member recruitment and retention.

Well, here I am, and the issue is still front and center for all of us. In preparing for this article, I looked over what I used in my interview. Interestingly enough, I am employing a good bit of the theories I proposed and have put them to work out in the field. Some have been met with success. Some are yet to be determined.

The number-one successful strategy for retention is to communicate what is going on with the chapter. Those chapters that prepare a seasonal calendar seem to have better superintendent attendance at meetings. I equate it to a superintendent at his facility. One would not just decide to

aerate their greens a couple of weeks out and surprise their pros or their golfing members without fearing for their livelihood. In the same fashion, chapters need to avoid finalizing meeting details at the last minute. I have seen the success the Everglades GCSA has enjoyed in meeting attendance due to the fact that they provide their yearly events calendar at their annual meeting. I believe they averaged 88 attendees at their 2012 functions. Their event attendance has actually grown over the past four years, as has their membership. The proportion of superintendents to vendors is also at a healthy ratio where their vendor supporters see the value in their participation. I have seen both scenarios and the lack of advanced preparation should cause chapter leaders some angst.

With regard to recruitment, we have had some success by conducting visits with members and non-members at their facilities. Several of the Florida chapters have really engaged with me in this process and we have seen a number of positive outcomes.

The chapters, with whom I have worked, asked their board of directors to identify 10 individuals who are members that are not very engaged with the chapter, non-members who have never been members, or non-members who have dropped their membership. In a perfect world, we will have identified 90 individuals that we can hope to visit over the course of a calendar year. We usually undertake five meetings that can be completed in half of a business day. This allows a local board director to be present at the facility as well.

By conducting these visits in the superintendent's office, the superintendent feels much more relaxed and tends to be

more forthright in our conversation. The conversation is intended to demonstrate the value of both the local and national associations and create an awareness of our benefits.

In the case where the superintendent used to be a member or is just not very active as a current member, we have been able to determine the root cause and soften their stance enough to have them attend a later meeting. Often times an invitation to pick them up for the next meeting followed by a personal phone call works wonders!!

I was at a recent Florida West Coast GCSA meeting where there were more than a few faces I recognized from these visits. The West Coast Chapter was the first Florida chapter to participate in this exercise, and I can see how some of the individuals we have engaged are now participating at their events. In the same fashion they have gathered intelligence that the board has been able to utilize moving forward. The chapter is very active in pursuing meetings with surrounding chapters and creating a greater sense of community over a larger area. This has boosted superintendent-to-vendor ratio and has again enhanced the value for their members.

I know none of this is earthshattering information, Heck, even I, the understudy, thought of this! Getting back to good old-fashioned business practices can go a long way when trying to keep your members engaged or becoming more attractive to superintendents and assistant superintendents who aren't currently members.

Until next time,  
Ralph Dain – GCSAA Regional Representative (FL)

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**ENTERING THE SLOW ZONE**



**GREEN SIDE UP  
BY JOEL JACKSON**

Rumors of my retirement are just that, rumors. What is true is that I have reached another milestone in my chronological age. It's the same as the number often seen posted as the speed limit on our interstates and the Florida Turnpike. You do the math.

I'm not ready to fully retire so I've asked the FGCSA Board of Directors if I might continue my service with my primary focus as editor of our

publications and the website with the beginning of the New Year. Naturally there will be a salary adjustment, but by waiting I've maxed out my monthly social security benefit, which will help balance out the salary reduction.

This means that the FGCSA Government Relations Committee will need each chapter to step up and respond to Calls for Action on issues that will continue to challenge us. I will always participate with my letters to the editor and emails to regulators and politicians identified as the people to contact. Of course we all should be doing that anyhow. That's one of the main reasons for the FGCSA – unity for advocacy on any and all challenges our profession faces. It's not going to ease up in the near future with local ordinances still being advanced by cities and counties. Water availability is fast becoming the next front burner topic of conversation and regulation.

But it's time for my wife and me to do some more travel and see the rest of the USA. We

haven't made it to Yellowstone or Yosemite yet. Mount Rushmore, the Black Hills are also on our bucket list and we want to do Boston, Maine and Prince Edward Island also. Right now we are also planning on going on a one-month tour of Europe with our daughter next September.

I'm not hanging it up, but I am slowing it down a notch or two. I love telling your stories in the *Florida Green* and *Florida Golf Central* articles and *Golfdom* columns. Also I want to spend more time with our website to keep the information as fresh as possible and share more photos, etc and really make social media work for us.

The current make-up of the FGCSA Board of Directors is a crystal clear picture of the generational change in our association's leadership. It's time for the veterans and founders of so many of our chapters and policies to adapt to and support needed changes for the FGCSA to remain viable and productive and representative of our

profession.

It's obvious by the flagging participation rates across many of our local chapters that changes are needed, so the next slate of long-range planning meetings will be critical. We cannot cling to the old model of operation anymore. We need to get creative and be willing to try new methods and organizational changes to remain relevant to our members who rank more family time high on the list of things to do.

The key to your success and our association's future is participation. Pressures are being brought to bear on green industries on water use, water quality and fertilizer and chemical use. They will only increase. The best way for us all to guarantee fair and factual representation is for everyone who makes a living in golf is to participate in our industry at the local, state and national level.

The clock is ticking. Resolve this New Year to help by being active in your profession. It counts.



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