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The FLORIDA Green

WINTER 2017



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PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR: January, April, July and October

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$25 for four issues. Contact the FGCSA office.

ADVERTISING: For rates and information, contact the FGCSA office at 800-732-6053

EDITORIAL: All inquiries should be directed to the editor, Joel Jackson. Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs cannot be returned.

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Making Most of the Future Is How we Honor the Past

by Ricky Reeves

A lot has changed since I first got into this business - beyond the gray hair and having to let my belt buckle out a notch or two. The advances in science and technology have been phenomenal. There were still some “old school” guys around when I started, getting by – often very well – on their wits and lessons learned the hard way.

But those days are long gone. Today's superintendent has to be a lot more sophisticated to deal with the demands of the marketplace, the dictates of regulators and the constraints of a tighter golf economy. It's no longer enough to be a great grass-grower. Now, superintendents have to be just as good at a computer or in front of all kinds of people whether it's members and golfers or county commissioners.

Your association has had to evolve as well and, from my view here in the president's chair, I'm proud to see what a great job it is doing in that regard. The advances your association has made in its level of organization and ability to execute is good for everyone in golf in the state, not just superintendents. Think of the work we have done on water, fertilizer ordinances, with Florida Golf Day and so much more that helps the operational health of every facility in the state.

Closer to home we've been able to make a lot of positive changes as well. We have a new website and database, a new-look magazine and a re-energized golf schedule just to name a few things. Our BMP certification program has earned us great credibility in important places. We've also ramped up our focus on turfgrass research. We're working as close as ever, if not closer, with the team at the University of Florida to help them deliver answers to the puzzles we face.

It's been very gratifying to see all of these things come together in recent years and it's also exciting to consider what's possible in the years ahead. But for all the technology and science involved, at the end of the day it all comes down to the people.

We are all lucky to have benefited from mentors in our careers. But we're also lucky to benefit from the work of a lot of people we might never have met. They are the ones who laid the groundwork and got us to the point where we could take the next step. I was thinking about this recently following the loss of one of those very people, Jim Walker. Jim spent more than 30 years in the business and gave so much that he earned the Florida GCSA President's Award in 2001. You can get a sense of what life as a superintendent meant to him on page 8 of this issue.

On page 32 you can read about Bob Randquist, CGCS, the latest winner of the President's Award. And as you're reading you might reflect on how lucky we were for so long to have Joel Jackson, CGCS producing *The Florida Green*. When your new membership directory arrives in a few weeks, thumb through the first few pages and look at the lists of past-presidents, Distinguished Service Award winners and more. Then consider how many hours and how much heart and soul each of those people must have put in. The Marie Roberts Award is even named for one of them.

We should never lose sight of, or appreciation for, those who got us this far. The best way to do that is to honor their legacy by continuing to evolve to meet the challenges ahead. ■



Ricky Reeves, Miami Beach Golf Club, Miami Beach



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Lights, Camera, Action: Video Series on the Way



Jennifer Bryan

There is a lot of excitement in the air on a national level about the new GCSAA BMP Planning Guide and Template that will debut in February at the Golf Industry Show. This is a great opportunity for our industry to showcase our professional commitment to the environment and our natural resources. Here in Florida we have been doing this for some time. But it is not always easy to get the message out in a form and fashion that makes clear to our legislators, club owners, club members and the general public exactly how committed we are.

To that end, I am excited to announce that the Florida GCSA will work with 375 Photography to produce our first video this year. This will be the start of a series of videos we will produce over the next few years to

better demonstrate precisely what it is you do for a living, and the value you bring to your community and the professionalism you exhibit when doing so.

Our debut video will focus on Best Management Practices and water usage – both hot topics this legislative year. We will showcase how Florida superintendents have worked closely with local and state agencies to be part of the solution. We will demonstrate the proactive position we have taken on environmental issues. The Florida GCSA's Golf BMP Program has been the industry standard and is being used as an example during GCSAA's launch of its BMP Planning Guide and Template. It is important that we communicate our role as environmental stewards and our dedication to responsible resource management.

This video will provide the viewer with a better understanding of what the golf course superintendent does on the course and why they are doing it. It will tell your story, touching on water conservation practices, safety, environmental practices and the valuable resource that golf courses provide to the community.

The Georgia GCSA recently debuted a new video showcasing golf's role in providing urban green space and how that plays into the social, economic and environmental well being of the surrounding communities. The Virginia GCSA has also produced its own video. Hopefully you have had a chance to view one or both. If you haven't done so, try and find a few minutes to check them out. They can be found on each chapter's website.


Justin Wojtczak with 375 Photography and *The Florida Green* editor Trent Bouts produced the video for the Georgia GCSA. I will be working with them over the next few months to pinpoint our message and produce the best video representation we can. I am excited about this process and even more excited about what we will be able to do with the video series.

Many groups have opinions on what golf is and that is their absolute right. Still, I'm not sure how many of them have an accurate understanding. It is in everyone's best interests for us to do all we can to give them access to the facts because some of these groups influence decisions that dictate how superintendents can and cannot go about their work.

At the end of the day, education is a job for all of us. We hope that with this video series we will give you, the Florida GCSA member, something you will be proud to pass on to your golfers, members, neighbors, elected representatives and more. I am looking forward to this production and can't wait for its debut. ■

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also to Tom Alex, Lisa McDowell and the Villas
of Grand Cypress for hosting our event.

James “Jim” Walker

Members and friends of the Florida GCSA extend their sympathies to the family of James “Jim” Walker of Miami who died November 27, 2016. He was 72. Walker was a major figure in the South Florida GCSA, which he led as president. He retired in 2008 after 30 years maintaining golf courses for Miami-Dade County. In 2002, he won the Florida GCSA President’s Award for “superintendent pioneers who were instrumental in state or local affairs...”

in Ocala. One reason for making the move was that Mel Sligh, the superintendent, was a University of Florida graduate who had studied under Dr. G.C. Horn and had a lot of knowledgeable friends in the area. I drove Mel nuts asking technical questions, but I’m glad I did.

About a year later Mel left for the Palma Ceia Country Club job in Tampa, and there I was, the superintendent of a first-class private club. The course is a Desmond Muirhead track spread out over 250 acres with water and sand everywhere.

In 1976, I went back to San Antonio and worked for Watson Distributing. They were the Jacobsen, Cushman and Ryan distributor for all of Texas. Selling orange and green iron for a couple of years was another learning experience I was happy to have had. While there, San Antonio hosted the GCSAA National Convention and meeting the factory engineers and designers was very educational.

Two years later I returned to Florida and the Miami area where I was born and raised. While growing up in Miami I had played golf and baseball for Hialeah High School. I attended Miami Dade Junior College and Valdosta State College on a baseball scholarship and, in my senior year, I was on the NCAA Division 2A National Championship team. I was MVP for the series going 8 for 11 at the plate with three home runs, a triple and a double. I got looks from the Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox after college, but my fastball was too slow and major league pitching is a world of difference from college ball.

For the past 23 years, I have been the manager or superintendent at various times at the Key Biscayne, Palmetto, Briar Bay and Greynolds Park golf courses for the Miami-Dade County Parks Department.

It was also in 1978 that I met Alan Weitzel, my longtime friend and sometimes boss. Those 23 years have been interesting to say the least. I’m a Howard Cosell type of guy so politics was never my bag. I give Alan a lot of credit for helping me see the importance of junior golf. Over the years we did a lot of work bringing this wonderful game to kids in South Florida. We also started a golf league which is still going strong 23 years later.

One of the things I’m most proud of is the people who started their golf maintenance careers with me. At Briar Bay they included: Carlos McKeon, Eric Knudsen, Robert Wethy and Susi (Goldstein) Walker. At Greynolds Park a long-haired, skinny kid right out of college named Joe Pantaleo mowed and fertilized his first bermudagrass with me.

With six years to go before retirement, I still enjoy the golf course business. I have served on the South Florida GCSA board since 1994 and was president in 1998 to 2000. Susi and I live in the Kendall area and besides playing golf, I’m an ardent audiophile. While all this golf stuff was going on I was a pretty fair jazz musician whose band played at the American Pavilion during the 1964 World’s Fair in New York...but that’s another story.”

Timothy “Tim” Richard Smith

Members and friends of the Florida GCSA extend their sympathies to the family of Timothy “Tim” Richard Smith, 51, of Venice who died on December 8, 2016 as the result of a car accident. Smith was golf course superintendent at Boca Royale Golf and Country Club in Englewood. He had worked at the club as an assistant earlier in his career before returning as superintendent in the summer of 2011. Among other facilities he worked at over the years was Laurel Oak Country Club in Sarasota with Mack Baugh.

He was born on August 21, 1965 at the U.S. Army Base in Nuremberg, Germany. He grew up in Sarasota and enjoyed golfing, fishing and flying, but most of all he adored his adopted dog, Dodge. Survivors include his mother, Sally Roberts of Sarasota, sister, Tracy Comer of Sarasota, and two brothers, Larry Luttrell and Tommy Smith, both of Sarasota. Tim was preceded in death by his father, Clarence Richard Smith.

A Celebration of Life was held early January at Boca Royale Golf and Country Club. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Suncoast Humane Society.



The late Tim Smith with Paul Housewright of Champion Turf Farms before resprigging at Boca Royale last summer.

Jim Walker was a regular contributor to *The Florida Green* but a major contributor to his profession.

Walker’s wife, Susi, who also works as a superintendent for the county, says her husband started his career in golf working for Club Car in San Antonio, TX. He moved into golf course maintenance at Pecan Valley Country Club before moving to Florida and Ocala Country Club in 1973. He then moved to the Country Club of Silver Springs Shores in 1975 before being hired by Alan Weitzel and Miami-Dade County. Weitzel was a President’s Award winner in 1997 and Distinguished Service Award winner in 2006.

Walker wrote a regular column for *The Florida Green*. What follows is one such entry from 2002 after winning the President’s Award when he was superintendent at Greynolds Golf Course in North Miami Beach:

“The road leading to my receiving the 2001 Florida GCSA President’s Award from the South Florida GCSA began 31 years ago at the Pecan Valley Country Club in San Antonio, TX. I was the assistant irrigation technician (night water man) plugging in quick couplers and doing course prep work. Pecan Valley hosted the PGA Championship in 1968 and it was a great place for a golf hound like me to begin my career. The course was a J. Press Maxwell design and I consider myself lucky to have run or worked at many courses that had great architects.

After Pecan Valley, came the Ocala Golf Club where I worked under Jim Yancey, older brother to PGA great Bert Yancey, the course manager and golf professional. He had hired Jim to be a working superintendent and the experience there was great. Bert hosted tour players Frank Beard and Deane Beamon who came down in the winter and played until the tour started in California each year. Being around those guys gave me much insight on what top players thought were important in course conditioning.

Two and a half years later I left Ocala Golf Club to become the assistant superintendent at Silver Springs Shores Golf Club also



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CHAPTER ROUND UP

FLORIDA WEST COAST

Early November, the Florida West Coast GCSA met at Cypress Run Golf Club. Host superintendent Duane Van Etten and the entire staff did an excellent job and the course was in perfect condition. The education topic for the event was “Pigment vs. Overseed” and both of the speakers brought industry leading knowledge to the conversation.



Eric Dixon

The first speaker was Robin Wicker, owner of Geoponics, and he gave the members an overview of pigment and dye technology. He also discussed some of the successes he has seen using pigment instead of a traditional overseeding program.

The other speaker was Andrew Jorgensen, CGCS from On Top of the World, in Ocala. Andy spoke about the practical application of a pigment program. He discussed ways his club implemented a pigment program instead of traditional overseeding. He discussed proper fertilizers to mix into the program as well as other additives. He also spoke about the impact the pigment program has had on his club financially and agronomically.

The golf was a fun format and each member played their own ball. There was no official scoring however there was closest-to-the-pin awards on all par threes. Mark Henderson of Upstart Products won one of those and Luke Little of Cushman/EZ-Go won the other three! Luke graciously donated back to the chapter from his winnings.

Overall it was a great event. The education was excellent. The chapter was able to provide CEU's. And many members were happy to be back at Cypress Run Golf Club.

In December, our holiday charity event at Cheval Golf and Athletic Club was hosted by superintendent Gregg Richardson. Gregg and the staff at Cheval were incredibly helpful in coordinating the event and the course was in excellent condition.

The event sponsored Christmas lists for children at A Kid's Place Tampa Bay. A Kid's Place provides residential services to children from birth to age 18, who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. It provides a variety of services which meet the social, educational, medical and psychological needs of the child.

Their primary focus is to keep siblings together in a safe, stable, home-like environment until a more permanent placement can be provided. The chapter was very happy to identify this local charity and to make a contribution to their cause.

The event raised \$4000 plus a variety of donated toys, which will all go directly to A Kid's Place Tampa Bay. The entire chapter played a role in this donation, especially the tee sign sponsors and attendees of the event. Almost all vendor members of the chapter sponsored a tee sign for \$100. The rest of the cash donation was funded by a 50/50 raffle and other member contributions.

The golf for the event started as a two-person scramble but quickly became a two-person, two-team shamble, and by the end of the day was a four-person scramble. It was a great laid-back golf outing. There were five closest to the pins awarded on the course.

With the success of the event the holiday charity event looks to become an annual chapter meeting. Thanks to all who contributed and attended.

-Eric Dixon, Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf Course.

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CHAPTER ROUND UP

CALUSA



A banner showing the companies that gave such great support to the third annual Golf for the Children Christmas Classic.

Calusa GCSA's Golf for the Children Christmas Classic, which helps sponsor The Children's Network of Southwest Florida, was at the Verandah Club in Fort Myers, on the club's Old Orange course. The event in December raised a total of \$31,400 and our support has grown to where we now assist four homes, three in Fort Myers and one in Port Charlotte. A total of 30 kids were being sponsored with gifts for Christmas, food for Christmas dinner and assistance with the homes throughout the year however the Calusa GCSA can help.

It was a fantastic turnout with 35 teams. A small amount of rain at the start of the morning was not enough to hold off a wonderful event. Course superintendent Mark Teders had the Old Orange course in wonderful condition. Incredible sponsorship from vendors, suppliers and other contributors helped make it a great day in support of The Children's Network of Southwest Florida.

The past couple years have seen a great partnership grow with The Children's Network and their chief executive officer Nadereh Salim. Nadereh shared her sentiments with us saying, “I am so impressed by how you all set the bar higher every year and strengthen your support and commitment to helping our kids. Thanks for partnering with us and I know our kids are all grateful and blessed because of you guys.”



Calusa GCSA board members with residents during a visit to a girls' home in The Children's Network of Southwest Florida.

Two days prior to the event, members of the board, and a few Calusa GCSA members not on the board, visited a boys' home and a girls' home, to deliver some Christmas presents. The atmosphere at both houses was a comfortable one and even spawned a little basketball interaction with both the girls and boys.

As with any sport, there's always a chance of physical distress. Just ask Jake Wentz, our vice-president and director of agronomy at The Verandah Club, about his dislocated finger. All in good spirits right, Jake?

Thank you all who participated and

contributed in various ways, including the Calusa GCSA board, vendors, suppliers, outside contributors, all other members and The Verandah Club, for your generosity in giving to such a great event.

Welcome Andy Engelbrecht of SiteOne Landscape Supply and Mike Chickrell from The Forest Country Club as new directors of the Calusa GCSA. Andy is a “local” and has been in the golf business for more than 25 years. He started in the pro shop, then became a superintendent before moving into his current role in agronomic sales for SiteOne Landscape Supply.

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Mike is originally from West Virginia and moved to Florida three years ago from Idaho where he worked as an arborist. He was a spray technician at Fiddlesticks Country Club before going to The Forest to be an assistant and then moved to his current role as superintendent of the Bobcat Course.

-Mark Jacobs, Shell Point Golf Club.

SOUTH FLORIDA



Some of the toys donated at the South Florida GCSA's holiday celebration at Flamingo Lakes Country Club.

Thanks to Steve Randall, GCSAA director of chapter outreach, and GCSAA regional representative Ralph Dain for their help recently with a strategic planning session. This was a productive session that generated a new mission statement for the South Florida GCSA and established some short-, mid- and longer-term goals. Membership growth will be a priority for the association in 2017.

Early December, chapter president

Billy Entwistle, Jr. hosted our holiday celebration at Flamingo Lakes Country Club in Pembroke Pines. Thanks to everyone who supported this event and who brought along donations for our Toys for Tots drive. Thanks also to Billy and his crew for putting on a great venue. The food was amazing.

We also extend sincere sympathies to Susi Walker on the loss of her husband and a legend of the South Florida GCSA Jim Walker who died late last year. Jim and Susi were among the very few husband and wife superintendents in the profession. We will all miss Jim and are thinking of Susi.

At press time were looking forward to getting together at Crandon Golf Course in Key Biscayne in the middle of January.

-Ricky Reeves, Miami Beach Golf Club.

SUNCOAST



Director of agronomy Keith Einwag and director of golf Jason Hrynkiw were winners of the Suncoast GCSA pro-super tournament at Longboat Key Club last fall.

We are saddened to have lost one of our colleagues in Suncoast GCSA member Tim Smith from Boca Royale Golf and Country Club. Tim was involved in a serious car accident and never recovered from his injuries. He was a longtime member of our association and our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends.

Early December we raised \$2,000 for our benevolent fund with our event at Bird Bay Executive Golf Course. That lifted to \$4,000 the total of our fund which is designed to help in times of hardship and tragedies like that which took Tim's life. Tim's passing was marked by a celebration of life at Boca Royale Golf and Country Club on January 8.

Our Christmas Party was at Gasparilla Inn and Club and included a golf tournament followed by dinner and an awards ceremony. We also used the opportunity to generate gifts for Toys for Tots, which is a wonderful cause.

At press time we were looking forward to our joint meeting with the Florida West Coast GCSA at Topgolf in Tampa. This event was to include a two-hour educational session with Lyn Tumlinson of Lift Coaching presenting three tactics to overcome the "I'm-spread-too-thin" syndrome. Lunch and golf competition in Topgolf's innovative venue was to follow. We greatly appreciate Chris Key and Luke Barnett of BASF, Zach Lane of Bayer CropScience and Jeff Huelsman of Syngenta with their help in making this a very reasonably priced event.

PALM BEACH



Travis Shaddox from the University of Florida updates members at the Boca Dunes meeting on colored sand topdressing research.

It is with mixed emotions that we bring you this update from the Palm Beach GCSA. Uppermost in our thoughts at the moment is the health of Neil Sheridan, superintendent at the Rees Jones Course at Breakers West Country Club. Neil is battling serious illness. At press time, thanks to the efforts of Mark Reid and everyone at Breakers West, we were getting ready to turn out for a fundraising tournament for Neil. Neil is a well-respected member of our association and our prayers go out to him and his young family.

In contrast, we were happy to celebrate another of our members Bob Randquist, CGCS at our event at Boca Dunes Golf Club in the fall. Bob has been a fixture at Boca Rio Golf Club for many years and is one of the giants of our profession. It was the Palm Beach GCSA's honor to nominate him for the Florida GCSA's President's Award which was handed to him by Palm Beach GCSA president Dan Elchert.

We're also happy to share the news about another successful event to support Toys for Tots in December. Steve Yager and his staff had the golf course in outstanding condition at Atlantis Golf Club and the entire club was very accommodating to our group. In addition to all the toys our members donated, we were able to make a financial contribution to Toys for Tots as well. It was another outstanding event and our members should be proud of what they do for their community.

Our toys were added to the collection



Palm Beach GCSA director Nate Watkins and secretary Robert Anderson presented a plaque of appreciation to Toys for Tots host superintendent Steve Yager from Atlantis Golf Club, along with treasurer Parker Ferren, vice president John Spiwak and directors Deron Zendt and Ryan Swilley.

generated by Atlantis Golf Club as they are a pick-up site for the Toys for Tots Foundation. Jason Brown, Atlantis Golf Club's director of golf, helped with our

decision in that process.

Another piece of good news was the report in the Palm Beach Sun-Sentinel newspaper

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CHAPTER ROUND UP

in December. The story began: “The Palm Beach and Treasure Coast chapters of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America are as committed to growing the game as they are to growing grass.” Then it went on to report how the two chapters had presented a \$10,000 check to The First Tee of The Palm Beaches at Golf Village at Admirals Cove in Jupiter. The news led the golf section and carried a photo of the check presentation. This was great publicity for the association and our commitment to grow the game.

See you all at the Florida Reception at the Golf Industry Show in February.

-John Spiwak, Eastpointe Country Club.

EVERGLADES

The entire board of the Everglades GCSA thanks everyone for their support of the annual Christmas tournament at Bonita Bay Club in December. We were fortunate that the club was able to open both courses for our use and we had a fantastic turnout with 168 players. Hal Akins, CGCS and Paul Bradley did a wonderful job as hosts and we were able to collect a huge number of toys to benefit the Children's Home Society of Florida.

A lot of people felt this was one of the better Christmas tournaments we've had for a few years and it had a little different flavor at the end when we had a play-off between the winners of the four-man scramble from each course. Eventually, the winners were Tom Conroy of Forestry Resources, Jimmy Alston from Eagle



Tom Conroy of Forestry Resources, Jimmy Alston from Eagle Creek Golf and Country Club, Corey McDonough from Kensington Golf and Country Club and Matt Fancher of Pinestraw of South Florida were golf winners at the annual Christmas tournament.



Everglades GCSA members with some of the toys collected at the Christmas tournament to support the Children's Home Society of Florida.

Creek Golf and Country Club, Corey McDonough from Kensington Golf and Country Club and Matt Fancher of Pinestraw of Florida.

Your president Stuart Bothe and the rest of the board worked on every detail to assure

things went off without a hitch. With golf courses in great shape it was a wonderful day all around and a great way to round out the year.

Early January we had another great turnout for the G.C. Horn Memorial

Education Event with 125 people getting some valuable information and CEU's at Gulf Coast Church of Christ in Naples. We had six speakers who all did a great job. Our thanks to John Cisar, Ph.D. of Harrell's, Paul Mitola of Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and William Crow, Ph.D., Adam Dale, Ph.D., J. Bryan Unruh, Ph.D. and Jeremy Welter all of the University of Florida.

In other news, the Everglades GCSA recently continued their pledge to the Florida GCSA research fund of \$10,000 consecutively over the next three years. Also, congratulations to Everglades GCSA past-president Bryce Koch for winning the Florida Turfgrass Association Championship at Innisbrook Golf Resort, Copperhead Course. We wish Bryce well when he represents the Florida GCSA in the GCSAA national team championship in Orlando in February.

Our next meeting is our education and dinner gathering at Vanderbilt Country Club on March 7.

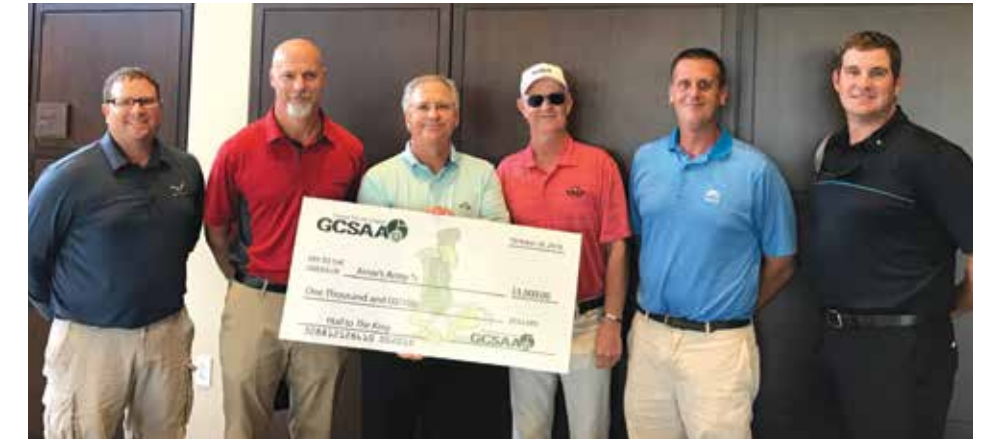
-Tyler Casey, West Bay Golf Club.

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Congratulations to Brett Harris of Redan Consulting International who received the Larry Kamphaus Award at the 40th Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot Open in December. Brett was a deserving winner of the award which began in 1998. The award recognizes family values and community service, dedication to employer and the golf industry, ties to the Central Florida GCSA and mentoring. Previously Brett was with the Tavistock Group for about five years and was superintendent at Lake Nona Golf and Country Club for 12 years.

Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club won the Crowfoot Open and Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Golf Club, himself a Larry Kamphaus Award winner, won the net division. Lane Allen of Club Care and David Robinson from Marriot Golf were Flight A winners in the two-man scramble and Kevin Rotti - another Larry Kamphaus Award winner - from Eagle Dunes and

CHAPTER ROUND UP



Joshua Kelly, David Robinson, Glenn Blackburn from Arnie's Army, Terry Stephenson, host superintendent Rusty Wilson and Bryce Gibson with the check for \$1,000 presented to the charity.

Stuart Cohen of Pathway Biologic won Flight B.

Many thanks as always to host superintendent Tom Alex and everyone at Grand Cypress Golf Club for such an outstanding day.

We were also happy to donate \$1,000 to Arnie's Army, which does wonderful charity work in the Orlando area. The check was presented at our memorial tournament at Tranquilo Golf Club at Four Season Resort. Rusty Wilson did a great job as host. We hope to continue our relationship with Arnie's Army in future as a mark of respect to Mr. Arnold Palmer.

-Terry Stephenson, Monarch Golf Club. ■



Larry Kamphaus Award winner Brett Harris of Redan Consulting International with host superintendent Tom Alex from Grand Cypress Golf Club.



Crowfoot Open winner Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club with his trophies.

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Florida GCSA to Play WELCOME ROLE AT GIS

The Florida GCSA will kick off this year's Golf Industry Show in Orlando with an official hello at the opening night celebration on Tuesday, February 7. Association leaders plan to give visitors a taste of Florida with a brief video and spoken presentation.

"It is an honor to be first up at one of the biggest golf industry events in the world," Florida GCSA president Ricky Reeves from Miami Beach Golf Club says. "It gives us the chance to set a tone for the event so we will be warm and upbeat, just like Florida always is." The opening night celebration runs from 5.15pm to 6.45pm in the Valencia Ballroom of the Orange County Convention Center.

More Florida GCSA members will be on stage to receive awards once the event is underway. Shannon Easter from Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton will receive the overall and national private categories of the 2016 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards. Sean O'Brien,



CGCS from The Ritz-Carlton Member's Golf Club in Sarasota was a chapter winner with the Suncoast GCSA. (See story page 34)

Other awards will be given and The Class of 2016 certified golf course superintendents will also be introduced. The high point of the event will be the presentation of the Old Tom Morris Award to Paul R. Latshaw, who prepared golf courses for nine major championships over 38 years as a golf course superintendent.

Hopes are high that at least one other Florida GCSA member will already have secured a trophy by that point. Several members are among front-runners for the GCSAA national golf championship including past winners Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club (2014) and Seth Strickland from Miami Shores Country Club (2009, '08 and '05). They both finished in the top 10 last year as did Bryce Koch from Cypress Lake Country Club.

More than 800 members and friends of the Florida GCSA are expected at B.B. King's Blues Club for the annual Florida Reception during Golf Industry Show week.



Zendt and Koch are on the Florida No. 1 team, which will defend its title in the annual chapter championship, along with Jason Bagwell from Gleneagles Country Club, Jimmie Murphy from Stone Creek Golf Club and Jason Schulte from The TwinEagles Club.

Regardless of who wins what awards and where, members and friends of the Florida GCSA will celebrate all the same at the annual Florida Reception at B.B. King's Blues Club between 7.30pm and 10.30pm on Wednesday, February 8. More than 800 people are expected at what is the biggest event on the Florida GCSA calendar.

Attendees will have the chance to win a high-end paddle board valued at more than \$1,000 in a raffle to raise money for the Florida GCSA benevolent fund. Money from the fund is used to help members and their families during times of extreme hardship.

Florida will also be prominent during the Golf Industry Show when GCSAA unveils its Best Management Practices template for chapters to create their own documents, tailored to their state. A major initiative for GCSAA in 2017 and beyond is for all 50 states to have a state-wide BMP that courses can adopt and customize. Chapter leaders and the nine GCSAA field staff members will help lead this effort. In drafting the BMP template, GCSAA has drawn heavily on the Florida GCSA's pioneering efforts in this area.

The spotlight will return to Florida GCSA members later in the week when three face elections for the GCSAA board of directors. (See next story.) ■

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Three Florida Candidates SEEKING NATIONAL OFFICE

The Florida GCSA could have three members serving on GCSAA's board of directors after the annual meeting during the Golf Industry Show in Orlando in February. Kevin Sunderman from Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club in St. Petersburg is seeking to join Darren Davis, CGCS and Rafael Barajas, CGCS who have both served on the board for a number of years.

Davis, from Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, has been nominated for the role of vice-president and Barajas, from Boca Grove Plantation in Boca Raton, is one of two nominations for the role of secretary-treasurer. Should he lose that vote to John Fulling, CGCS from Kalamazoo Country Club in Kalamazoo, MI Barajas will remain on the board as a director with a year left to serve on his current term.

Sunderman is among a slate of at least six candidates contesting three available seats on the board. If Barajas is elected secretary-treasurer, Fulling would likely be nominated from the floor to continue as a director since he is at the end of his two-year term. Sunderman is a Florida GCSA past-president as is Davis. Barajas moved to Florida from California in 2015. Elections take place at the annual meeting at 1.30pm in room W311 of the Orange County Convention Center on Thursday, February 9.

Here is a brief look at Florida's candidates:

RAFAEL BARAJAS, CGCS



Boca Grove Plantation, Boca Raton

Age: 53

Years in the industry: 36

Job title and years at current facility: Director of golf course operations, one year

Previous facilities as a superintendent: Hacienda Golf Club, La Habra Heights, CA 21 years; Palm Desert Country Club, Palm Desert, CA three years; Desert Lakes Golf Club, Ft. Mohave, AZ three years; American Golf, various facilities eight years.

Offices held in professional associations: GCSAA director, 2011-present; EIFG board of trustees 2014-present; California GCSA, president 2011; GCSAA of Southern California, president 2011.

How do you see the future of the industry and the profession – challenges, opportunities, and the role GCSAA can play: The future of the golf industry will continue to be challenging to say the least.

The association must remain proactive in educating legislators and the public about the environmental, economic and recreational benefits of our industry. With the plethora of issues before us - not the least of which are water scarcity, environmental regulations and labor issues - we must remain proactive in ways that continue to promote our image as leaders and change agents at the forefront of our industry.

GCSAA's enhancement of the vitality of the game of golf has been strengthened through the work with allied and industry organizations. GCSAA was instrumental in helping establish We Are Golf, a coalition of golf's leading organizations working together to communicate to congressional leaders and local lawmakers the game's economic, charitable, environmental and fitness benefits. GCSAA plays an important role providing affordable and relevant education to our members and developing vital programs such as the BMPs that will assist our members in providing a sustainably maintained facility for years to come.

What motivates you to serve on the national board: The opportunity, honor and privilege to give back to the golf industry that has done so much for my family and I. The opportunity to continue to assist paid- and elected-leadership to advance the golf course superintendent profession to 2020 and beyond.

DARREN DAVIS, CGCS



Olde Florida Golf Club, Naples

Age: 49

Years in the industry: 28

Job title and years at current facility: Golf course superintendent, 24 years

Previous facilities as a superintendent: 0

Offices held in professional associations: Everglades GCSA director through president 1994-2013. GCSAA chapter delegate 2001-2010. Florida GCSA director through president 1995-2002. Florida Turfgrass Association director through president 2003-2011. Musser International Turfgrass Foundation director 2011-present.

How do you see the future of the industry and the profession – challenges, opportunities, and the role GCSAA can play: GCSAA members are employed at a wide variety of facilities and serve golf-

ers with very different skill levels and motivations for playing the game. A "one-size fits all" approach to serving our members will not work. From the onset of my GCSAA board service, I have been committed to serving each and every member of the association to the best of my ability and I remain steadfast in that commitment.

I also remain devoted to enhancing the perception of the golf course superintendent and promoting the significant value they provide to the game of golf and to the environment. During my time on the board of directors, we have achieved a tremendous amount of success in this area. Our enhanced media presence, our productive working relationships with allied golf associations and the "Thank a Golf Course Superintendent" campaign are just a few examples of GCSAA's member advocacy efforts.

I am equally devoted to enhancing the association's governmental advocacy efforts. Our leading role in the We Are Golf coalition and National Golf Day, the hiring of a Washington, D.C.-based director of congressional and federal affairs, our environmental profile surveys and our Grassroots Ambassador program are also just a few examples of GCSAA's efforts in governmental advocacy.

I also believe that there is "strength in numbers" and I am very proud of the efforts the association has made in both retaining members and in membership growth. The equipment manager member classification is one area that GCSAA has seen tremendous growth.

I also remain committed to ensuring the association continues to provide our members with the same excellent educational opportunities, professional development programs and networking opportunities that have helped me become the superintendent I am today. Obviously, the needs of GCSAA members are ever evolving, and I am excited to assist in providing our members with improvements in the technology we offer and the evolving methods of communication.

Finally, the industry is in need of employees of all skill levels. Labor is a challenge for golf course superintendents across the country. Last year the association formed a student task group and in 2017 GCSAA will engage an assistant superintendent task group. I am pleased to be the vice-chair and chair of each respectively. A goal of these task groups is to determine the needs of these members and in turn be sure GCSAA is adequately serving these extremely important groups of individuals. They are the future of the profession.

What motivates you to serve on the national board: My motivation to serve comes from my desire to continue what my predecessors on the board have done, to grow upon the accomplishments of the current board and to be sure GCSAA is best serving the needs of its members. I became involved in GCSAA to give back to an industry that has been very good to me. It has been rewarding to do so and I am anxious to continue improving upon an association that can do even more amazing things for members who will follow me.

KEVIN SUNDERMAN

Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club, St. Petersburg



Age: 39

Years in the industry: 20

Job title and years at current facility: Director of grounds, 11 ½ years

Previous facilities as a superintendent: Whetstone Golf Club in Caledonia, OH. Also worked as assistant at Snee Farm Country Club in Mount Pleasant, SC; East Lake Woodlands in Oldsmar, FL; TPC at Prestancia in Sarasota, FL.

Offices held in professional associations: All offices through president with both the Florida GCSA and

Florida West Coast GCSA. Environmental Research and Education Foundation board member.

How do you see the future of the industry and the profession – challenges, opportunities, and the role GCSAA can play: Moving forward the golf course industry is faced with many challenges, but with challenge comes opportunity. Some issues we face include water supply, fertilizer and pesticide restrictions, labor shortages, a decreasing number of prospective superintendents entering the industry, budgetary constraints, a need to grow the game, a continuing need to improve golfer perception of superintendents and public perception of the game as a whole.

Working together, superintendents have the opportunity to not only address these issues but positively advance the golf industry moving forward. GCSAA needs to lead the charge, organizing superintendents to work towards common goals. They have already started this with the Grassroots Ambassadors program but can use the same model to do much more. This model can be used to attract new people to the industry, grow membership, strengthen chapters, advocate and even provide agronomic support. The current Grassroots Ambassadors would not be responsible for doing this but a new group of volunteers committed to a specific goal.

GCSAA will work to strengthen chapters and engage superintendents. With the national, the local and the individual all working together we will be able to overcome our challenges and advance the golf industry and superintendent profession.

What motivates you to serve on the national board: I am passionate about the game of golf and desire to help others. I am blessed with skills that are well suited to serve as a GCSAA director. Through service I hope to positively impact the lives of our members, their families, their employees and all golfers worldwide. ■



GCSAA BOARD CANDIDATES

The slate of candidates that will be presented to members for election:

President:

Bill H. Maynard, CGCS

The Country Club of St. Albans, St. Albans, MO

Vice-President:

Darren J. Davis, CGCS

Olde Florida Golf Club, Naples, FL

Secretary-Treasurer:

Rafael Barajas, CGCS

Boca Grove Plantation, Boca Raton, FL

John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS

Kalamazoo Country Club, Kalamazoo, MI

Director:

Mark F. Jordan, CGCS

Westfield Group Country Club, Westfield Center, OH

Jeffrey F. Millies, CGCS

Edgewood Golf Course, Big Bend, WI

Kevin P. Sunderman

Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club, St. Petersburg, FL

Rory Van Poucke

Apache Sun Golf Course, San Tan, AZ

John Walker

Bentwater Yacht and Country Club, Montgomery, TX

Jeff L. White, CGCS

Indian Hills Country Club, Prairie Village, KS

For the secretary/treasurer candidates, if Rafael Barajas, CGCS, is elected secretary/treasurer, John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, will have to be nominated from the floor for the position of director, since he is at the end of his two-year term, and the remaining year of Rafael Barajas, CGCS, director's term would be filled by an appointment. If John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, is elected secretary/treasurer, Rafael Barajas, CGCS, will automatically remain on the board as a director for another year.

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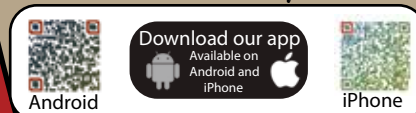
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Trent Bouts



Bill Davidson, CGCS

Country Club of Naples. He'd promoted a similar philosophy when he was on the board of the Florida GCSA. Something had to happen. As executive director Jennifer Bryan recalls, "We were hemorrhaging money, sometimes as much as \$30,000 a year."

We'll have to wait a few years to see if those sixth-grade lacrosse players ever reach the sport's major league – his daughter still loves him at least – but it's a fact that the brutally honest navel gazing that Davidson and others encouraged around the board table was integral to making the Florida GCSA better.

Bill Davidson had his daughter's lacrosse team in tears. As coach of the mostly sixth-graders, he was making a teaching moment of a heavy defeat. They would never improve until they worked on the things they weren't good at, he told them. "If you only keep doing what you already do well, you'll never get better," he said. "You've got to be willing to do things that are uncomfortable."

It wasn't a new theme for Davidson, CGCS from the Country Club of Naples. He'd promoted a similar philosophy when he was on the board of the Florida GCSA. Something had to happen. As executive director Jennifer Bryan recalls, "We were hemorrhaging money, sometimes as much as \$30,000 a year."

"When you're losing an average of \$10,000 for 10 years then your business model is not sustainable," he says. "We had to put business back in the business. Without doing that I believe we would have gone bankrupt or have to fold or merge with another organization like the Florida Turfgrass Association."

Today, the Florida GCSA is on its strongest financial footing in many years, perhaps ever. Investment accounts stand around \$230,000 and there is always enough money in the association checking account to cover monthly expenses. That wasn't always the case.

Bryan remembers too many occasions when she found herself staring at an invoice wondering what to do next. It wasn't just surprise expenses that created a problem. For example, each year the Florida GCSA has covered rental costs for golf carts during the annual Florida Spring Regulatory Tour, where regulators visit golf facilities and agricultural facilities to grow their knowledge. The association's golf cart tab was generally around \$2,500 plus a \$750 sponsorship.

Even though the event was annual budget item, that didn't necessarily mean the money was there. "It was really stressful for me six years ago," Bryan says. "There certainly were times when it was like, 'Oh my God. I don't think there's enough money to pay the bills. It really was a case of living check to check.'"

Part of the problem was that the association was still operating with a hand-written ledger and every transaction was handled



Florida GCSA directors Steve Wright, CGCS, Mark Thomas, Tyler Green and Mike Stevens, CGCS at a recent board meeting.

completely independently, even when a dozen of them might be with the one vendor. “It was overwhelming for me the number of communications going in and out for this and that,” Bryan says. “It was slow and almost impossible to keep track of what was being billed and what was being paid.”

All that began to change, she says, during the time that Gary Myers, CGCS from BallenIsles Country Club was president in 2010-11. “We created our industry partnership program so vendors were writing one check instead of 10 or 12 over the course a year,” she says. “That meant they weren’t feeling nicked and dimed all the time, having to explain the value of each event or sponsorship to corporate which might be in some state on the other side of the country.”

With the backing of earlier presidents such as Shane Bass, CGCS from Glen Arven Country Club and Matt Taylor, CGCS from Royal Poinciana Golf Club, Bryan had also instituted other changes. One of the most significant early on was transferring the association accounts to QuickBooks, which later became standard for the affiliated chapters as well.

Momentum continued in 2011-12 under the leadership of Mark Kann from the Plant Science Research and Education Unit at the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and Nancy Miller, CGCS from Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club. Along the way the association tapped into GCSAA resources to carry out strategic planning. Hand-written bookkeeping gave way to electronic accounting. The financial bleeding began to slow.

Then Kevin Sunderman from Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club became president and the time was ripe for acceleration. Early in 2014 he delivered a now celebrated Power Point during the week of the Golf Industry Show in Orlando that was a little like Davidson’s

message to his lacrosse team. It made some 50 or so people in the room that day uncomfortable, not least of all Sunderman.

He’d known since a heated argument during his very first board meeting in 2008 that the role of the state association as it pertained to the 11 local GCSAA affiliated chapters had been contentious. But he adheres to Davidson’s ethos and knew that real change would only come through tackling what the association wasn’t doing well. As Davidson said in this magazine last year, Sunderman’s presentation “showed the inner-workings and the nitty-gritty. He exposed the dirty truth so everyone could digest it.”

By the time Davidson himself took over from Sunderman in the summer of 2014, he was able to write the following in his first column for *The Florida Green*: “The Florida GCSA board has made great

strides this past year under Kevin Sunderman’s leadership and Jennifer Bryan’s guidance to tighten up operational expenses. The Florida GCSA has controlled expenses and done such a good job running the business side of the association that this past year we were able to generate a modest profit for the first time in a decade. I am also happy to report that your board is using a portion of that profit to replace money taken out of our reserve account years ago.”

The association has finished in the black each year since, a far cry from the days when that only happened if the Golf Industry Show was in-state and there was a maximum turnout for the Florida GCSA reception. With the “business back in the business” the association has been able to dramatically improve the level of service to members.

“We’ve been able to develop the BMP project and put the resources into it early and nurture it to a point where it’s successful,” Davidson says. “We’ve been able to be heavily involved in legislative issues across the state. We’ve been able to engage in advocacy when we’ve needed to, because we’ve had the money. We’ve been able to do things like raffle a surfboard and a guitar at the reception during GIS. When you have money you can start new and great traditions.”

Another initiative spawned of a more productive business is the Florida GCSA’s research account which funnels money to research efforts most beneficial to superintendents in the state. In addition to funding research, the account has also helped equip researchers at the University of Florida. Recently, the Florida GCSA helped secure a sophisticated nitrogen analysis device for UF at a cost of more than \$50,000.

“That’s the approach we want to take,” Bryan says. “Because that

equipment will benefit all superintendents in the state time and time again. If you’re not using your money for the good of the people you serve then what’s the point of your business.”

Davidson concurs. “It’s okay to make money,” he says. “It gives you a big stick. You know the Teddy Roosevelt saying, ‘Walk softly and carry a big stick?’ Well, we were walking softly but we were carrying hickory sticks for a long time. When you have money, you become more powerful, you can react faster and compete better. You can be present at more meetings. When you have the money to pay attorneys to represent you and get a successful compromise on a fertilizer ordinance, that’s okay.”

Bryan says another major factor in the Florida GCSA’s progress has been the support of industry partners large and small. “Some of them have been with us a long time,” she says. “Some, like Toro, could see what we were trying to do when we instituted the industry partner program and jumped right in and have never wavered.”

Today, advertising in *The Florida Green* and the annual membership directory constitutes the largest share of revenue for the association at 40 percent. Membership dues account for 34 percent, events like the annual reception and golf championship generate 24 percent and the BMP certification program two percent.

The next priority for the association is growing membership and participation. That aspiration has been around for some time but was subject to a cart-before-the-horse debate at board level. Would more members make the business be better or would a better business attract more members?

“It was talked about every year,” Davidson says. “But real sustainability for the association would only come with a restructuring of the business. Even if we’d had double the number of members we still had an unsustainable business model.”

And it is true that members and potential members across the state were becoming increasingly skeptical about the value of belonging. It was Sunderman’s contention that the Florida GCSA needed to build and demonstrate its worth before anything else. “Kevin was hugely insistent, and rightly so, that anything new we did had to bring more value to the members,” Davidson says. “He is a very smart business manager. The financial turnaround was built around his drive.”

For his part, Sunderman recalls that Power Point presentation in 2014 as a catalyst rather than a message in and of itself. “A lot of the real substance came through the dialogue,” he says. “There was such a disconnect between chapters and state at that time that much of the basic information was new to the attendees. The presentation provided a catalyst for further conversation and created greater urgency to work together for the sake of unity and the industry.”

That work continues. ■

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Florida Researchers Optimistic DESPITE CONTINUED CHALLENGES

By Dr. J. Bryan Unruh

It's an exciting but challenging time for the Turf Team at the University of Florida. In my 20-plus years at UF, I haven't previously observed the cohesive and cooperative nature that the UF Turf Team is now experiencing. For the first time in many years, we truly have statewide collaboration with turf faculty from Ft. Lauderdale, Gainesville and Jay working together to find solutions to the challenges that golf course superintendents are experiencing. Examples are plentiful and include:

- The UF Turf Team was selected by GCSAA to develop the GCSAA Best Management Practices Planning Guide and Template funded in part by the USGA through the Environmental Institute for Golf. This tool will be unveiled at the 2017 Golf Industry Show and will be used to meet the goal of having golf course BMPs established for all 50 states by the year 2020.
- The UF Turf Team has launched a new in-depth "Evidence-based Turf Management" series of educational offerings that provide research-based solutions to managing turf. These one- and two-day hands-on training events provide in-depth, evidence-based education on a variety of turf management topics.

- The UF turf breeding program, led by Dr. Kevin Kenworthy, is one of the most robust warm-season turfgrass breeding programs in the U.S. Over one-half of the entries in the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) zoysiagrass test and 50 percent of the entries in the NTEP St. Augustinegrass test are from UF.
- Dr. Adam Dale, UF's new turf entomologist, has initiated research focused on converting under-played areas of golf course to wildflowers to promote functional habitats for pollinators and other beneficial insects – providing information that is very much needed.
- UF turf faculty are cooperating together on three projects, with funding from the Florida GCSA and affiliated chapters, to: 1) study the impact of colored topdressing sands on dormancy and spring green-up of bermudagrass putting greens; 2) quantify the seasonal rooting dynamics and resource allocation of warm-season turfgrasses and to elucidate the influence of temperature on warm-season turfgrass growth; and 3) study new bermudagrass cultivars – drought, shade, fertility, ball response – when maintained under fairway conditions in Florida.

Drs. J. Bryan Unruh, Jason Kruse, Travis Shaddox and Don Rainey from the University of Florida developed content for GCSAA's BMP planning guide and template, which will be unveiled at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando in February. They are pictured with Old Tom Morris outside GCSAA's headquarters in Lawrence, KS last year.



But the challenges are also great. Never before have the demands on university faculty been so great. For the golf course superintendent, meeting or exceeding the demands of the owner, greens committee and golfers is how success is measured. Success for a university professor, however, is measured by the number of grants, graduate students and publications. It is estimated that a professor's research and extension program needs in the range of \$200,000 to \$400,000 a year to fund staff and graduate student salaries, equipment and facilities to have a meaningful impact. Multiply that by the dozen or so turf faculty at UF and the collective total need is \$2.4 to \$4.8 million!

A challenge for turf scientists is that our research is generally "applied" rather than "basic." Applied research has practical application (e.g., How colored topdressing sand influences putting green quality) whereas basic research focuses on gaining greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of a system (e.g., The role heat shock proteins have on the drought tolerance of warm-season grasses).

Generally, applied research does not qualify for state and federal competitive research grants making it difficult for turf scientists to obtain large grants. Even so, many university administrators prefer, or demand, that professors pursue and obtain these grants because they come with higher rates of funding to cover indirect costs (IDC).

These costs result from shared services such as physical plant operation and maintenance, utility costs sponsored projects administration and depreciation or use allowance for buildings and equipment. Including a percentage to cover IDC in grant applications has become increasingly important for university administrators who look to these funds to offset the shortfall between what they receive from the state and the actual cost of doing business.

Applied research is generally funded by state commodity groups and industry associations such as Florida GCSA, the Florida Turfgrass Association and the Turf Producers of Florida. Industry associations are typically incorporated as not-for-profit associations and previously were not assessed IDC on the grants they funded. On July 1, 2016 a UF policy was implemented that requires all grants, regardless of funding source, to impose a 12 percent

minimum IDC assessment. Consequently, fewer dollars coming from the turf associations are being used directly by the professors to hire student labor, buy supplies and to cover the repair costs on the turf maintenance equipment.

Several years ago, in preparation for an article I was writing for a national trade association magazine, I conducted a survey of turf faculty across the country. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents indicated that their institution's financial support had decreased in the past five years while about 20 percent indicated their support had remained the same. Four in five respondents indicated a reduction in operating dollars and three out of four turf professors had seen cuts to their technical support staff funding. Additionally, two-thirds said that their travel budgets were reduced.

UF turf faculty responses mirror those from across the country. In that same survey, I asked the question "Has your state's turf industry support of your program increased, decreased, or remained the same in the past five years?" Interestingly, the responses were roughly equal – about one-third of the faculty felt support had increased; one-third said their support remained the same; and one-third stated their industry's support had decreased.

The final paragraph of that article was this: "University turf programs are quickly coming to a crossroads – will they continue to exist or will they fade away? I am of the opinion that the answer to this question resides with the turf industry. Will the industry renew its commitment to support their state's academic turf program by reinvigorating their membership to tackle the funding challenges? Or, will they allow these university programs to fade into obsolescence?"

Speaking for the UF Turf Team, we are excited that Florida's golf course superintendents have taken a major step forward in their commitment to fund research. The commitment in 2016 was exceptional – three major research projects; funding for a graduate student; and a hefty investment in a critical piece of laboratory analysis equipment. Well done and thank you. ■

-Dr. J. Bryan Unruh is professor and associate director of the University of Florida's West Florida Research and Education Center.

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Andy's Wall Can Talk

And tells a story of outreach

By Trent Bouts

From time to time Andy Jorgensen's former secretary at On Top of the World would chide him about his political ambitions. "One day we'll see you as the Mayor of Ocala," she used to say. She had a case. Jorgensen, left, already had his own wall after all. Stretching the width of his office, it is heavy with plaques from groups he's served and certificates he's earned.

If some walls are built to keep people out, Jorgensen's is of a different construction. His is made of outreach and involvement. "You know, I do like politicking and rubbing elbows," he concedes. "And if the need ever came up and somebody pushed me to do it (run for office), I could probably do it."

But that doesn't mean you should expect to see his name on a bumper sticker or curbside sign anytime soon. For now, the goals he pursues in the political area are far more professional than personal. Deliberately and with a passion, he has embedded himself at the intersection of where superintendents meet those who say what they can and cannot do on their golf course.

County commissioners, state regulators, congressmen: Jorgensen has shaken hands and talked business with all of them, and more. In addition to oversight of 54 holes at On Top of the World, he is a grassroots ambassador for GCSAA, a Florida GCSA director, vice-president of the Florida Turfgrass Association and president - again - of the Seven Rivers GCSA.

He is a board member of the Jeff Hayden Memorial Envirotron Golf Classic for Turfgrass Research and a director of Leadership Ocala Marion, a group that works to inspire and develop community leaders. In 2014, he won an Environmental Leader in Golf Award from GCSAA and Golf Digest.

At its core, his motivation is simply to protect what he loves, being a golf course superintendent.

"To me it's not just a job, obviously," he says. "You know what they say, 'Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life.' I've never worked a day in my life. It's not just growing grass. It's the whole industry. This industry is unlike any other. The camaraderie, the networking and the friendships you form are second

to none. I love everything I do, you know. I try to be involved as much as I can to continue that."

One threat, Jorgensen believes, is a cocktail of ignorance and emotion fueling opponents, communities and decision-makers for whom sometimes the science is not enough. "You know they are very emotional and people's personal beliefs are hard to overcome in this industry," he says. "Honestly, the general public is pretty uneducated with what we do. It's either ignorance or un-education or people are blind and don't want to see certain things."

He cites a recent example where the City of Temple Terrace was preparing to vote on a summer fertilizer blackout. The Environmental Research and Education Foundation weighed in. "Instead of summertime when the grass needs it the most, and science proves that it's okay, EREF said let's work together and go to a winter black out that science has shown is better," Jorgensen explains. "Then somebody responded in an email that we should know that EREF is an industry stakeholder group only out there to get what we want to get."

Jorgensen shakes his head. "It's like, guys, think about this for a minute," he says. "We live in Florida too. These areas that you are protecting are the exact areas that we live in and work in. We want to protect them too. I like to go swimming in the ocean. I don't want green toxic algae. I want to go fishing too. But science says one thing. You've got to put your beliefs and personal feelings aside and follow that. You have to go back to science and believe in it."

About 18 months earlier, Jorgensen attended a Citrus County commission meeting where another fertilizer ordinance vote that played out to a similar refrain. A series of speakers supporting a blackout offered statements he says were simply not based in fact.

"I hate it when somebody gets up there and presents fallacy that is taken as truth," he says. "But when these things are said to uninformed county commissioners they often believe it because that's where their emotion is. Whereas if I get up there and say, 'That guy is wrong. Here are the facts.' They are going to say, 'You are industry so you're only going to tell us what you want us to believe.' How do you solve that problem?"

Not by being silent or absent, Jorgensen argues in answer to his own question. Yet either or both are often the case. At that Citrus County meeting Jorgensen was one of just three turfgrass industry voices against a chorus of "probably two dozen environmentalists and residents." "We'd put the call out to try and get people to attend and to speak," he says. "But obviously we were outnumbered."



“You know what they say, ‘Do what you love and you’ll never work a day in your life.’ I’ve never worked a day in my life. It’s not just growing grass. It’s the whole industry. This industry is unlike any other. The camaraderie, the networking and the friendships you form are second to none. I love everything I do, you know. I try to be involved as much as I can to continue that.” - Andy Jorgensen, CGCS, pictured left

Jorgensen knows the demands of the job make it difficult for superintendents to take on additional responsibilities.

“How do you get a superintendent that works all day, you know, 10-11 hours a day, to go to a city council meeting at 6 o’clock that night and wait until the 12th item on the agenda which may not be until 9 o’clock,” he asks. “I am fortunate because my boss understands that if I need to go to the neighboring county, Alachua, to speak on a fertilizer ordinance, it is going to benefit us here. If me going to that meeting prevents Marion County from enacting a stricter ordinance because Alachua County didn’t, then, hey, we just benefited from it.”

Whether the reason for staying away is overload or even apathy doesn’t change the outcome in a world that – as many have observed – continues to be run by those who show up. “Everybody thinks, ‘Hey, it will never happen here or somebody else will go do it for me. I don’t need to go,’” Jorgensen says. “But if everybody has that as an attitude then nobody goes.”

Sometimes it’s not just going but when you go. Any political advisor worth their salt will tell you that the time to introduce yourself to a decision-maker is when you don’t need anything. If you wait until you do then you’re likely too late. Human nature dictates that we do business more comfortably with those we know.

That is one reason why Jorgensen serves on the board of Leadership Ocala Marion. Several years ago he completed the 10-month program which is a form of immersion learning series where participants spend time behind the scenes getting first-hand experience in how various departments operate.

“So I’ve been on the board for three years now and it’s cool because you get to meet local policy-makers,” he says. “I know the county administrator because he and I served on the board together. I know the head of Parks and Rec. because he and I were in the class at the same time, same with the sheriff-elect. You meet local officials and make those relationships that can benefit you down the road.”

He says golf and the green industry have done a better job in recent years “educating the general public on the benefits of, not just golf, but urban green spaces and turfgrass in general.” “It’s long overdue,” he says. “We should have been doing this 20 years ago. But is what we are doing now enough? I don’t think so.”

He draws an important distinction between being active and being effective.

“My personal opinion is that spending money on a commercial to show the public the benefits of the golf course on the Golf Channel is missing the point,” he says. “If you are not into golf you are not watching the Golf Channel. If you are, then you already know! Let’s refocus and reach out to the people that don’t know about golf. We go to chapter meetings and superintendents talk about this all day long but we are preaching to the choir. And, you know, some of that needs to change.”

At the forefront of the “better job” the industry is doing is the work of the allied associations. In the case of the Florida GCSA, executive director Jennifer Bryan has been extremely valuable.

“The Florida GCSA has a bigger role because they are the keystone that brings everybody together,” Jorgensen says. “I think Jennifer has done an awesome job rallying the troops and spreading information so everybody is in the know. She’s been the representation at the hearings and local ordinances when other guys can’t make it. That’s very important. But by the same token, it’s key that the local chapters do the same thing.”

Andy Jorgensen was born in Kansas City, MO just down I-70 from GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, KS. But he grew up and got his start in golf course maintenance in Georgia. His parents owned a home in a golf course community and Jorgensen became close buddies with the son of the golf pro. “His dad was the one who hired me as a cart guy at the ripe old age of 14,” Jorgensen laughs. On his 16th birthday the general manager recruited him to cut cups and rake bunkers.

Jorgensen knew early on that he’d found his vocation. He went to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College where he completed two

degrees – golf turf management and commercial turf management – in two years. He also served as president of the student turf club, a harbinger if ever there was one.

In 2002, after two and a half years at Newnan Country Club southwest of Atlanta, he landed his first superintendent position. But it came with one catch which complicated life for another, Jorgensen’s girlfriend, Tracy. Her family lived in Atlanta – more than 400 miles from his new job at Southern Woods Golf Club in Homosassa.

“I promised her ... let me get two years under my belt as a superintendent and I’ll have a little more weight under my belt to go back up there,” he says. “Well, you know how it is. One thing leads to another. You’ve made friends. You’re making money. Other opportunities open up and 15 years later, here you are, still in Florida.” So is Tracy – and the Jorgensen’s have a daughter Samantha, 11, and son Wyatt, 7.

In fairly short order, Jorgensen moved from Southern Woods, to World Woods, to Sugarmill Woods, which are all under the same ownership. He arrived at On Top of the World late in 2005 and today has what he freely tells anybody is “the best job in Florida.”

“I may not make the most money but my stress level here is, like, zero,” he says. “I have a great boss above me and a great owner that understands that golf sells houses and if golf needs something then give it to them so we can sell another house. We are invested in this city. We have friends here. Job security is worth a lot more than a paycheck. And I’ve got that here.”

In addition to the golf courses, Jorgensen also helps coordinate landscape maintenance for about 4,400 of 5,200 homes in the community that has a footprint of about 4,500 acres of a potential 13,000. Much valued assets in his work are Jorgensen’s assistant superintendents Josh Carter and Nathan Armstrong. There are three second assistants, four turf equipment technicians, three spray techs, one irrigation tech and a crew of close to 40 plus a new secretary.

She hasn’t yet predicted a political future for the boss but in true keeping with the field, he’s keeping his options open. “If it happens it happens,” he says. “But it’s going to be down the road quite a ways.” ■



Just some of the many plaques that tell part of Andy Jorgensen’s story of outreach and engagement – from Toastmasters International, the Syngenta Business Institute and Toro’s Turf Professionals Club.

On Top of the World may be a community for those 55 and older but it’s at the forefront of one of the “youngest” trends in golf. Andy Jorgensen’s maintenance facility there is powered entirely by solar energy, making it one of only a handful of its kind in the nation.

The roof of the building is dominated by panels installed in 2011 that do such a good job Jorgensen hasn’t seen a power bill in four years. In fact, the system generates a surplus of electricity that Jorgensen on-sells to the power company.

“At this rate we’ve got about five and a half years left to recoup our investment,” he says. “The panels actually last 30-plus years so once we get it paid off we will have about 20 years of no power bills, free energy and a lot of income.”

Randquist Honored with President's Award AND AS ENTHUSIASTIC AS EVER



Bob Randquist, CGCS has been a fixture at Boca Rio Golf Club since 1998.

Bob Randquist, CGCS may be one of the few guys in the profession who truly needs no introduction. He's been around awhile and done pretty much all there is to do as a golf course superintendent. He's worked on both sides of the Mississippi; he's hosted major championships, USGA championships, PGA Tour events, served as president of GCSAA and is already in one hall of fame. But even after all of that, he still talks about the job with the enthusiasm of a newcomer.

"Over the years I've heard some superintendents say they're bored with the job or tired of it," he says. "I don't comprehend that. I'm sure it does happen to some people. But there's new technology and new science coming out constantly. There's plenty to keep the job refreshing. You're learning forever. I still enjoy the job immensely."

Even at 66, he's sensing some adrenalin at the suggestion of a major renovation at Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton where he is director of golf course and grounds. "There's been some talk of that possibility in the next year or two," he says. "I'm certainly excited about the prospect. As long as the club is still satisfied with the job I'm doing I'll be around for a few years yet."

Last fall, Randquist was honored with the Florida GCSA's President's Award. That is quite an achievement for someone who'd climbed many of his mountains even before arriving in Florida at the end of 1998. The award recognizes "superintendent pioneers who were instrumental in state and local affairs" with 20 or more years of service to the turfgrass industry. It sits as a book-end to

the Florida half of his career which followed more than 20 years in Oklahoma where his service was worthy of induction to the Oklahoma Turfgrass Hall of Fame in 2011.

"Bob's lifetime of service in our industry has reached far and wide," says Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Golf Club on behalf of the Palm Beach GCSA which nominated Randquist for the President's Award. "He gives back his time and knowledge to all in our business. Bob has always led by example, a handshake and a smile, a well-conditioned golf course and a willingness to share ideas."

Randquist received his award at a Palm Beach GCSA meeting at Boca Dunes Golf and Country Club on front of about 60 people. "I am very honored," he says. "When I see the names on the list of people who have received this award before me, I have to say it's wonderful to be included with them. To be alongside so many guys I have so much respect for is something I appreciate a great deal."

Randquist graduated from Anadarko High School in 1968 and received his B.S. degree in metallurgical engineering in 1972 from the University of Oklahoma. Instead a career in golf took hold but perhaps not as surprisingly as it might have appeared at the time. "Superintendents are diagnosticians," Randquist says. "In that respect my engineering training prepared me well for the agronomic side of the business."

Randquist made a significant impression during his time at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, OK from 1979 to 1998. There he hosted the PGA Championship in 1982 and 1994 and the PGA

Tour Championships in 1995 and 1996 as well as the U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur in 1987. He served as president of the Oklahoma GCSA and was highly involved in the Oklahoma Turfgrass Research Foundation.

During his time at Boca Rio, Randquist served on GCSAA's board of directors and was president in 2011. He served as a trustee for the Environmental Institute for Golf and on the committee of the USGA Green Section. He is a member of the Palm Beach GCSA and the Florida Turfgrass Association and teaches seminars each year for GCSAA.

Just as his career was centered in two states, Randquist sees his eventual retirement playing out in much the same way. He and his wife have bought a house in Edmond, OK and with a 20-month-old grandchild based there, the Randquists anticipate splitting their time between the two states. "Not in the traditional 'snow-bird' sense," he says. "But more likely three or four weeks at a time. We think of our house in Oklahoma as our mountain or ocean retreat...except without the mountain or the ocean!"

In the meantime, Randquist turns up to his office every day trying as hard "to get better" as he did when he started out. "I don't feel like I've ever had a full grasp of all the information that is available to us as superintendents, because it is constantly evolving," he says, adding that the pursuit of knowledge is a major part of the appeal. "Ours is one of the best professions anyone could be a part of. Mentally, emotionally and spiritually, it is immensely satisfying." ■



Palm Beach GCSA president Dan Elchert with President's Award recipient Bob Randquist, CGCS.



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GCSAA Celebrates Easter AT GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW

Florida golf's efforts to promote and enhance the game's environmental role will receive another shot in the arm when Shannon Easter steps forward to accept a major award at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando in February. Easter's work as maintenance director and environmental consultant at Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton has put him and his club at the leading edge of sustainability efforts.

As a result, he has won the overall and national private categories of the 2016 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards, presented annually by GCSAA and Golf Digest in partnership with Syngenta and Rain Bird's Golf Division. Easter was one of two Florida GCSA members named among the 2016 winners. Sean O'Brien, CGCS from The Ritz-Carlton Member's Golf Club in Sarasota was a chapter winner with the Suncoast GCSA.

"The ELGA winners are not only stewards for the environment, but excellent examples of the focus our industry keeps on sustainable efforts," says Rhett Evans, GCSAA's chief executive officer. "They are on the frontline of how superintendents are making great play-

ing conditions and environmental management practices work in tandem."

Easter has made environmental sustainability a priority during his five years at Broken Sound where he oversees two courses. He says the groundwork for many of the initiatives the award recognizes were laid by the superintendent he followed in the job, Joe Hubbard, and the club's general manager John Crean.

"Joe was definitely an environmental steward himself and John had already set a stage," he says. "So I took it and ran with it. I'm an outdoorsman. I fish. So I've always paid attention to the environment. Superintendents are all trying to do the same thing, to show that golf courses are good for the environment. Being recognized for what we are doing is a feather in our cap here at Broken Sound. Not many people are doing what we are doing."

Broken Sound has already won multiple awards for the club's sustainability efforts which include reducing chemical inputs, promoting wildlife habitat and extensive recycling. Easter does not

use fungicides anywhere except greens and even then only when disease pressure affects 40 percent of a green. The facility is home to 22 beehives that produce 2,000lbs of honey annually which is distributed to members. It also offers 13 acres of wildflowers and another seven acres of butterfly gardens.

Last year Broken Sound was second only to Waste Management in Florida for the amount of waste the club recycled. The club operates a 53ft. digester that helps the club recycle 96 percent of its waste to produce 10 cubic yards of compost a day. That compost is generated from waste that previously cost the club in the order of \$250,000 a year to haul away. "Now we use it in the beds for our annuals and problem areas on the course when we're aerifying," Easter says.

The club hosts the Allianz Championship for the PGA Champions Tour and last year managed to recycle 95 percent of waste generated during the event. "That's quite an achievement," Easter says. "About the only things we can't recycle are the plastic wrappers around drink bottles and food containers."

Broken Sound also recently installed 15 bat houses and future plans include five windmills to help generate power for the two maintenance facilities, a solar-powered parking lot and introducing carbon into the soil by water bodies to further filter nutrients.

"It starts by simply wanting to do the right thing for the environment," Easter says. "We do a lot of community outreach to educate others on what can be done; to show the positive aspects of what we do. We have presented to the Environmental Protection Agency, and to local homeowners. The message is that everyone can do something to better the environment."

Easter also hosts tours for members, school children and community groups like Boy Scouts. "We average about two a month," he says.

ELGA winners will be recognized Tuesday, February 7, during the GIS opening session. Winners will also be featured in upcoming issues of Golf Digest and GCSAA's official monthly publication, Golf Course Management magazine. ■

Broken Sound's 53ft. digester plays a starring role in Broken Sound's ability to recycle 96 percent of all waste the club generates.



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Shannon Easter with a sample of the 2,000lbs worth of honey Broken Sound's golf course bees produce each year.



Colleagues Take to Course TO HELP IN CANCER BATTLE

Florida GCSA colleagues and friends have rallied in support of Neil Sheridan, golf course superintendent at the Rees Jones Course at Breakers West Country Club in West Palm Beach. Sheridan, 35, a father of two children under the age of three, was diagnosed last fall with stage four cancer. He is being treated for Pheochromocytoma, a rare tumor that develops off the adrenal gland.

At press time, many of those close to Sheridan and a good number of those not-so-close were preparing to play in a benefit tournament to help offset what are expected to be huge medical bills. Breakers West Country Club - owned and operated by The Breakers Palm Beach - donated the facility for the event scheduled for January 20. Sheridan's boss, The Breakers' director of golf and grounds maintenance, Mark Reid is leading fundraising efforts.

"Neil has been a part of The Breakers family for close to 10 years," he says. "He has worked his way through the ranks to the superintendent position he now holds at our West facility. He is respected by all those he works with and is truly a leader with his team. He has taken everything in stride to this point and his attitude is inspirational."

Reid says news of Sheridan's illness hit the golf course maintenance department hard. "He's one of those homegrown kids who just works incredibly hard," Reid says. "The conversation when he broke the news was pretty tough. And it was difficult sharing that with the rest of the team. Everybody loves him. It's been an emotional journey. We spend more time alongside each other at work than we do with our own family at times."

The courage with which Sheridan has dealt with his illness to this point has brought a lot of things into perspective for those he works with, Reid says. "It certainly makes you hit the reset button," he says. "It makes you a lot more thankful for what you have and you go home and hug your family that much tighter. Neil's attitude has just been phenomenal. To take a life-threatening illness head on like he has is incredible. He will beat this. We all know he will."

Announcing the tournament in an email, Reid explained how Sheridan's illness revealed itself. "After a couple of months of stomach issues, back pain and loss of appetite the cancer was discovered," he wrote. "Unfortunately, by this time, it had spread to his T9 vertebrae and is nearly wrapped around his aortic artery, which completely rules out surgery unless it can be shrunk down." That treatment, which uses high-dose radioactive isotopes, Sheridan's treatment is being carried out at Sloan Kettering in New York, one of the leading cancer centers in the world.

"They specialize in treating this extremely rare form of cancer," Reid wrote. "He is truly in the best hands possible. The medical and

travel costs associated with this treatment and his cancer care is quite large and will be burdensome. Our goal with this tournament is to help offset some of those costs. Our hope is that we can take some of the financial stress off this young couple so they can focus on other things like getting well and taking care of their family."

Reid says donations are still being accepted through the Florida GCSA website. He says the association's new management software has been "very helpful" streamlining registrations for the golf tournament and making donating easy for those unable to attend. "We're very grateful to (executive director) Jennifer Bryan for help," he says. "She's been great to work with."

To donate to the Neil Sheridan benefit fund online, please go to floridagcsa.com, click on the News and Information tab then Member News. ■

Neil Sheridan with his wife Kate and their toddler daughter Lucy and infant son Keelan.



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IN THE NEWS

Excerpts from press coverage on people in the world of golf course maintenance in Florida.

Palm Beach and Treasure Coast GCSAs

Palm Beach Sun-Sentinel, December 4

The Palm Beach and Treasure Coast chapters of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America are as committed to growing the game as they are to growing grass. Fundraising events held by the chapters resulted in a \$10,000 check presented to The First Tee of The Palm Beaches a few weeks ago at Golf Village at Admirals Cove in Jupiter. The money will be used to maintain and enhance The First Tee facility in West Palm Beach, which features putting greens and a 400-yard driving range with holes that the kids can play as well as a clubhouse.

First Tee superintendent Ryan Kelly said the GCSAA also installed a booster pump to get water up to the 10-acre facility, which sits atop the former landfill that is now Dyer Park, and allowed for acid injection to lower the pH of the soil. The organization also funded a canopy for the driving range so individuals in wheel-chairs can receive instruction while protected from the sun.

“If kids don’t get involved in golf,” said Mark Reid, the superintendent at The Breakers in Palm Beach, “Where will we sit in 25 years?” “It’s awesome to be a part of this, to impact the kids so much,” said Blair Kirby, the superintendent at the East Course at Admirals Cove and a GCSAA Palm Beach chapter board member. “It’s hard for kids to start playing golf in Palm Beach County because access is so limited. To get them started at The First Tee is just phenomenal.”

Matt Schad

Turtle Creek Club, Tequesta

Courier News Weekly, January 5

Golfing snowbirds returning to North County this season found significant and noticeable changes at Turtle Creek Club in Te-

questa. In the process of renovating the course, officials dictated a reversal of nines, returning to the original layout as built by Joe Lee in 1969. “It’s like a new golf course,” says Joe Bostic, the head professional for the past nine years.

Mike Roche, a 1971 graduate of Palm Beach Gardens High School, was the project manager. Other principals were Steve Bolerjack, general manager and chief operating officer, and golf course superintendent Matt Schad. Contractor was South Florida Golf Renovations and architect, Kipp Schulties. The price tag for the work done last year was in the \$3.2-million range.

Matt Gaudet, CGCS

The Forest County Club

The News-Press, January 8

For three years, Matt Gaudet would steer a cart in early morning treks around The Forest Country Club’s two golf courses to make sure everything was copacetic for the first foursome. These days, he’s focused more on many other aspects of operations and excited about additional changes to come. “Before, I’d work to try to exceed expectations of the course as far as aesthetics and playability,” he says. “This time around, I’ll also try to make sure all other experiences including dining are superb and we raise as much money as possible including creative auctions.” A certified golf course superintendent who had been director of golf course maintenance at the South Fort Myers club since 2013, the 35-year-old was named general manager last June. “I’m now serving members on a broader scale... meetings, event planning, everything else,” he said. “We have a terrific staff.” A major six-month, multi-million-dollar renovation improvement project on the Bobcat course was completed in October 2015. The Bear, its other 18-hole course that was renovated in 2010, has been ranked by Golfweek Magazine as one of Florida’s Top 25 Most Distinctive Courses. ■



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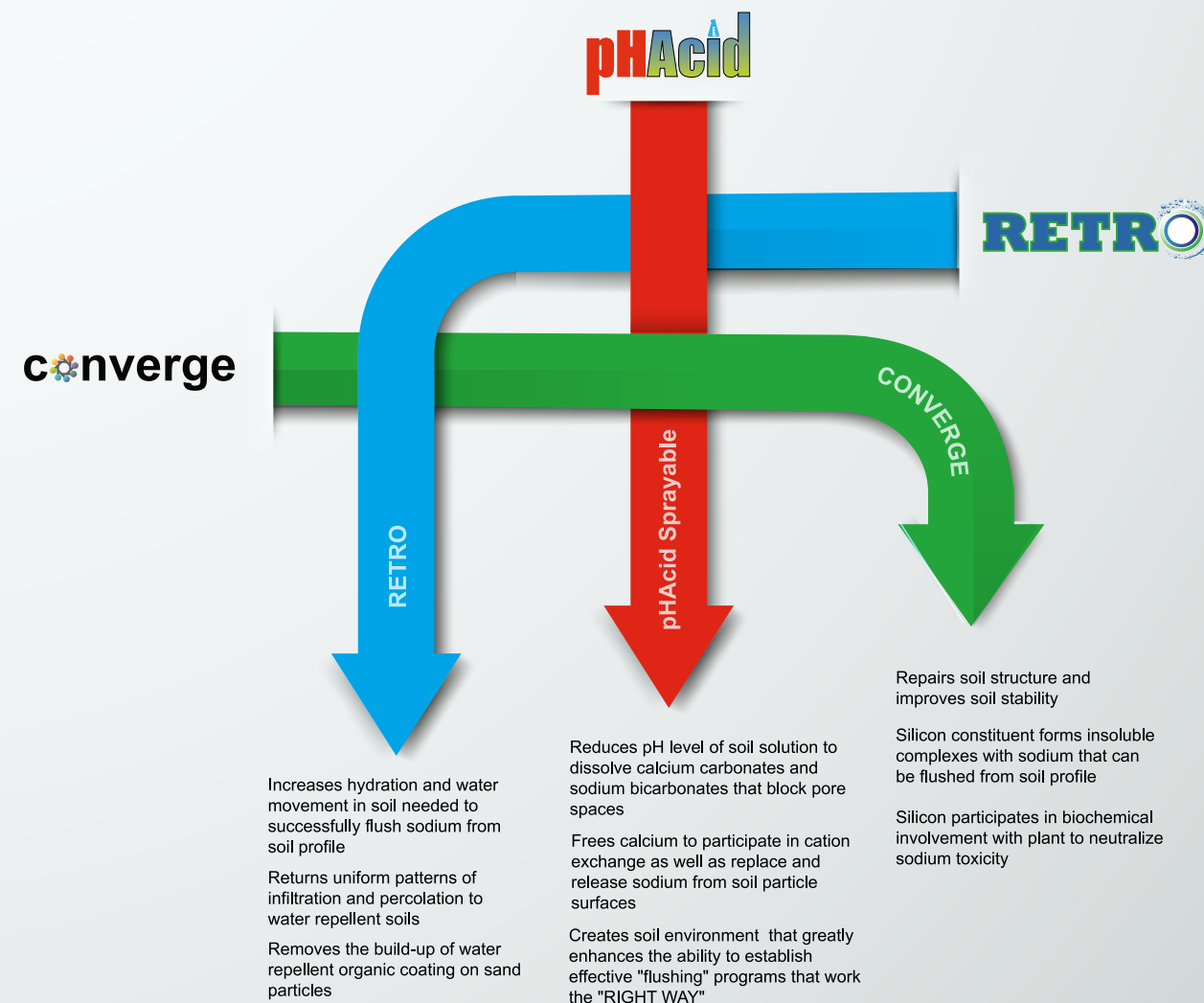
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Superintendent Snaps CAPTURE NATURE'S BEST

Golf course superintendents witness some of the finest nature has to offer. The Florida GCSA wants to celebrate that fact through an annual photography contest with entries featured in The Florida Green. Competition is likely to be stiff as indicated by some sample entries on this page.

One, of an eagle with a fish in its talons, is from Kyle Sweet, CGCS from The Sanctuary Golf Club in Sanibel. At press time, Sweet, whose interest in photography began in high school, was set to show his eagle image and many others as part of a wildlife photography exhibition at Captiva Civic Center. The exhibition - "Patience, Pause and Click" - was to run from January 19 to February 12 and feature work of a half-dozen local photographers.

"I took the eagle photo just a couple weeks ago on our 11th hole," Sweet says. "There was a large group of turkey vultures in the area so I almost overlooked it but then caught him coming in low toward the green. I took several shots and this one was one of the best. Interestingly, I think he actually caught this fish versus the typical stealing it from an osprey. I matched up the one puncture to the catfish head with the talon that has it in the photo. The eagle dropped the fish so I was able to take a close look.....no other punctures on the fish.....pretty cool stuff!"

Sweet's golf course and golf course wildlife library features more than 500 images now. Some were used to help the Florida GCSA illustrate golf relationship with the environment at meetings in Tallahassee some time back.

Other images on this page include a sunrise taken by Kyle Asbury, assistant golf course superintendent at Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton and an aerial view, taken from a drone, by Jake Wentz, director of agronomy at the Verandah Club in Fort Myers.


We'd love to see what other members have captured recently. Please send your high-resolution jpegs (300dpi or more) with a brief description to The Florida Green editor, Trent Bouts, at trentb@charter.net with the subject line: Florida Photo Contest. ■

An eagle lifts a catfish across the 11th hole at The Sanctuary Golf Club - by Kyle Sweet, CGCS.

A bird's eye view of the 18th hole on the Old Orange course at the Verandah Club - by Jake Wentz.


Sun breaks through the morning fog at Broken Sound Club - by Kyle Asbury.






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Yes, Florida There Is a Santa Claus

Do you remember that feeling as a kid of going to bed on Christmas Eve so giddy with excitement that it was nearly impossible to fall asleep? I remember hoping that Santa Claus had me on his “nice list” so I would get the gifts I really wanted. Growing up with four sisters who always told me I was going to be on the “naughty list” always made me uncertain of my prospects for the next morning.



Ralph Dain, CGCS

I was, however, confident that every Christmas, until about the age of nine, that I had actually heard the sound of hooves and sleigh bells on the roof. Those were magical times indeed.

Fast forward about 40 years, and I know for a fact that I have witnessed the spirit of Christmas hard at work among the chapters and members of the Florida GCSA. For all the children who are out there in the state that don't have that same giddiness that I experienced as a child, the chapters around the state did their best to help create that magic.

I tried to get to as many of the events that benefitted various local charities as I could. At each stop I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity in the form of donated toys and other gifts. As I recall, every local chapter conducted some benefit event leading up to Christmas.

I know that by the time this article makes it into The Florida Green that Christmas and New Year will be in our rearview mirror, and everyone will be immersed in the day-to-day labors of their golfing season. I hope that by reading this and seeing the photos from a few of the events you are able to recall not just the magic of the efforts of your chapter to bring a smile to children's faces but also a time, long long ago, when you where that child hoping your name was on the “nice list.” Then you would get that official Red Ryder,

carbine action, two-hundred shot range model air rifle.... Oops that is a different Ralphie and we know he went on to shoot his eye out, so never mind.

The Treasure Coast GCSA held their event at Gator Trace in Ft. Pierce and had a very nice turnout for the day's event. Florida West Coast GCSA members gathered at Cheval Country Club in Lutz for their Christmas event and also gathered toys and money to benefit A Kids Place of Tampa Bay, Inc. Chapter president, Kevin Sunderman eventually won their 50/50 raffle and donated his portion back to the cause. My final chapter event for the Christmas season was the Everglades GCSA event at Bonita Bay in Naples. Toys were collected to benefit the Children's Home Society of South Florida. The event was a huge success and there should be many happy faces from their efforts on Christmas morning.

On behalf of all the kids and families our superintendents have helped here in Florida, I offer my humble thanks. Your generosity and willingness to help complete strangers gave me that “giddy” feeling I used to have as a kid at Christmas all over again. ■

-Ralph Dain is GCSAA regional representative in Florida. You can reach at (785) 424-4306 or rdain@gcsaa.org.

Rob Markut, Scott Bell, Dennis Croumie, Lantie Hughes, Scott MacPhee, and Matt Boyd with some of the gifts donated by the Treasure Coast GCSA.



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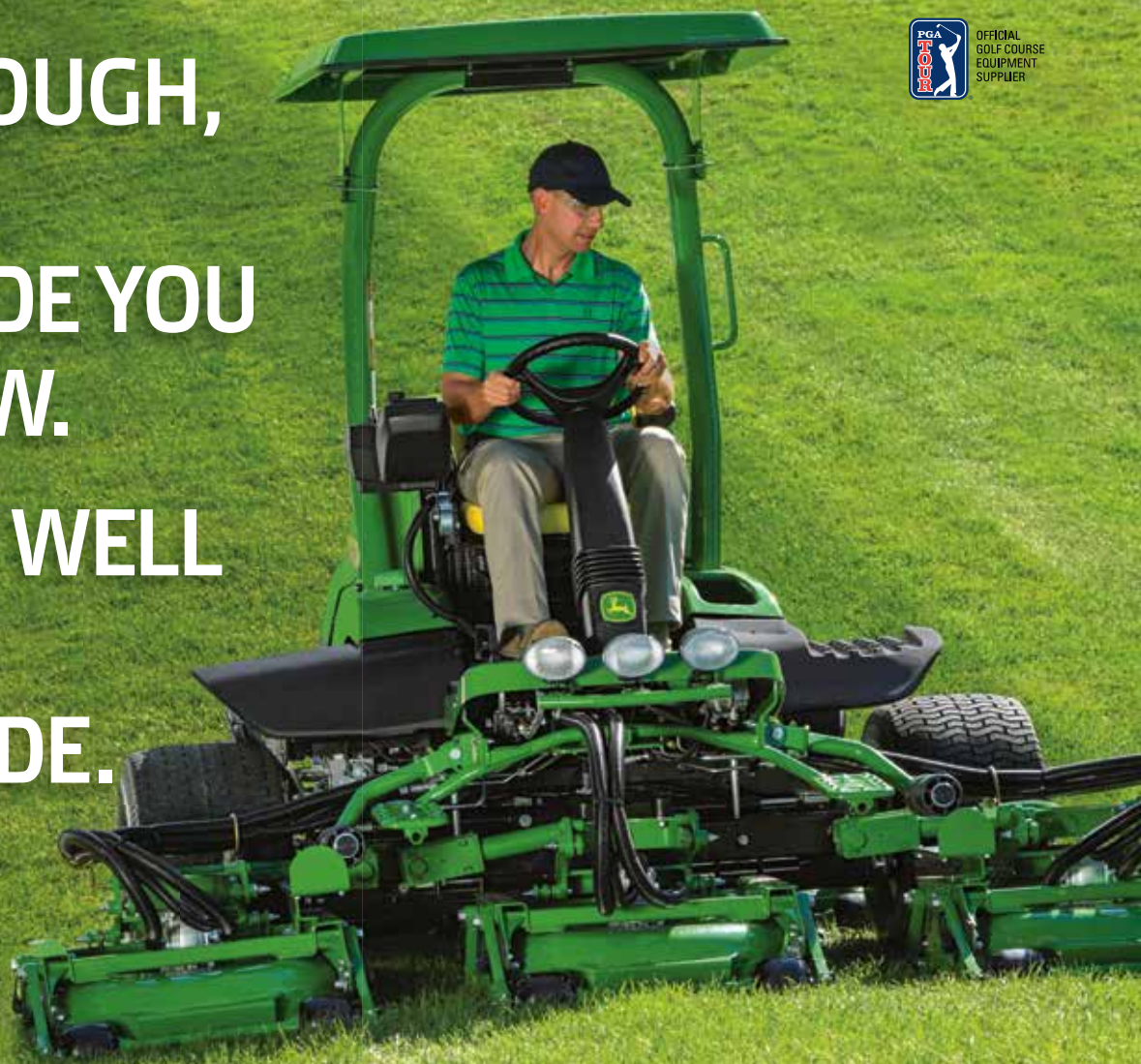


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