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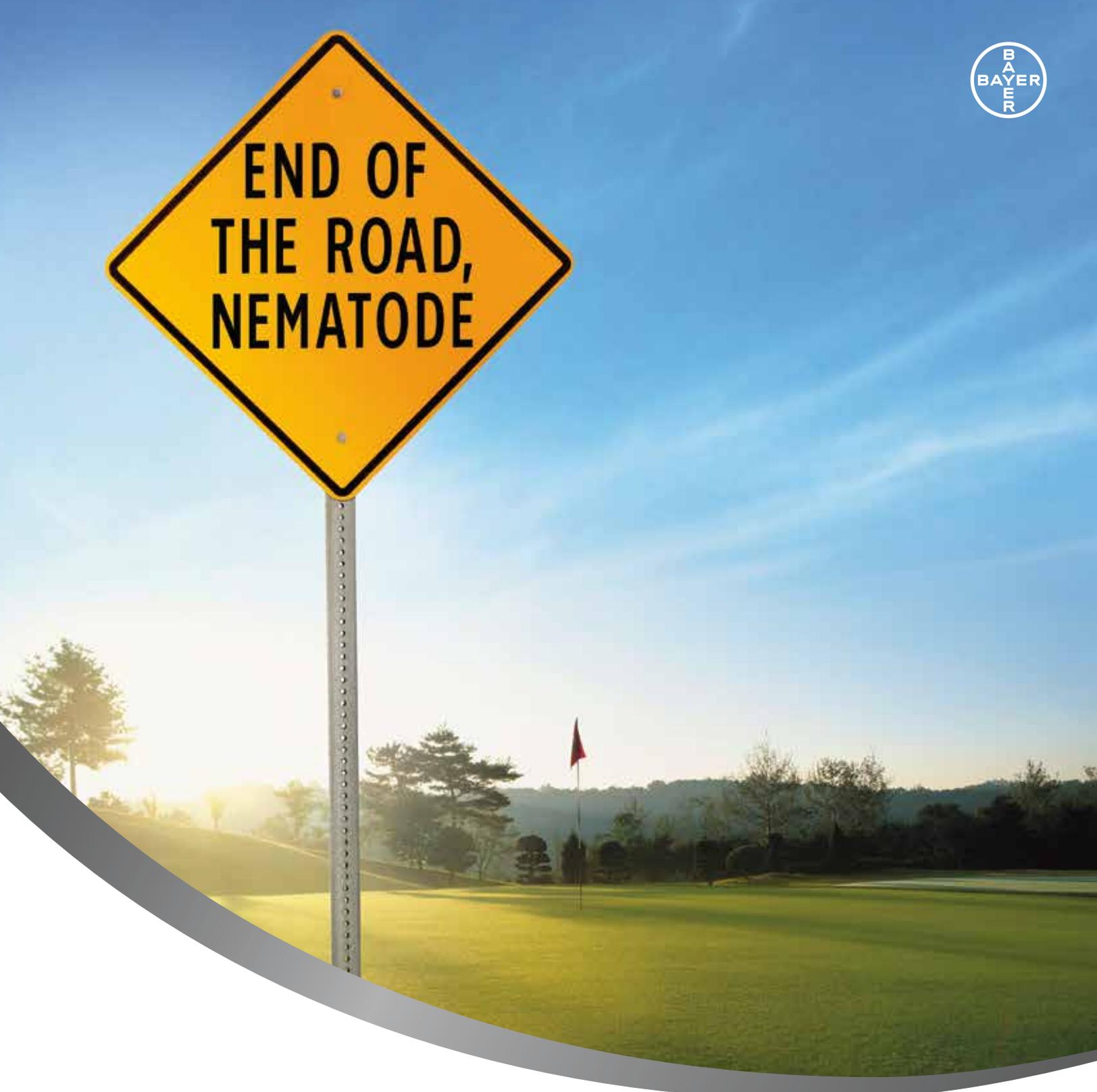
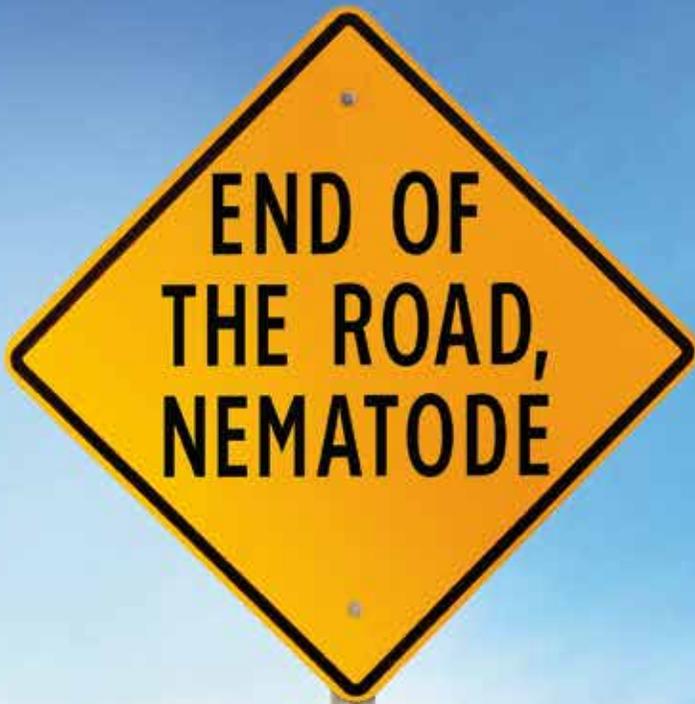
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Association Service Serves the Person and the Profession



John Curran

A few weeks ago, I spent the day attending the South Florida Turfgrass Field Day and Expo at the UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. It was a great day and really reminded me of many of the reasons I enjoy this profession. The simple matter of superintendents getting together, talking and sharing ideas goes to the very roots of why this association was founded. I ran into folks I had not seen in a long while. Catching up with them and talking about what they're experiencing on their courses helps me as well as makes me appreciate what I have. Smart phones and computers have made communication much easier but it's just not the same as facetime.

Back to the Expo. I hate to admit it, but this was my first visit to the Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. Dr. Travis Shaddox and his team have done a fantastic job with the funding they have available. The research plots on fairway grasses was of particular interest to me because we will be regrassing the West Course where I am superintendent at Johns Island Club in 2020. Research and education are other core goals of the Florida GCSA and it was very satisfying to walk those turf plots knowing they were funded by the collective efforts of you all.

That's just a tiny piece of the puzzle that the UF/IFAS turfgrass faculty works on. After getting to know most of them, I can say without a doubt they are a valuable asset to us as superintendents. They are more than willing to perform research on things we need and use every day. But to get the best out of this great research, we have to let them know what our issues and challenges are. In short, superintendents need to present their ideas for research projects. Bring them to your local chapter boards who will then pass them along to the Florida GCSA research committee.

The warm relaxed atmosphere at the turf expo couldn't have been in greater contrast to the tone of this year's Florida Golf Day in Tallahassee in February. While folks at the Capitol were happy to see us once again, it was clear that they, like all of us, were still in shock from the terrible events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. It's fair to say that golf was obviously not on the top of the priority list for our legislators. And at that time, nor should it have been.

I'm also going to be fortunate enough to be heading to Washington, D.C. for National Golf Day on April 25. I write about these travels not to brag (those who know me well know that's not my way) but to encourage everyone to get involved. Since joining the Florida GCSA board and working my way up to president, I have met some great people, forging many lasting friendships along the way. Service to the profession is incredibly rewarding.

I know you would hear the same thing from people who've spent much of their careers matching their day job with service to the industry. People like our own Darren Davis, CGCS who was elected GCSAA president in February, or Tim Hiers, CGCS who received the USGA Green Section Award recently, or my fellow board member Andy Jorgensen, CGCS who also serves as president of the Florida Turfgrass Association.

We all owe people like this our thanks for going above and beyond, but in reality, they would be the first to say they have gotten more out of their service than they have given. That same sentiment hit home to me as I walking around the Turf Expo, seeing faces and having great conversations with people I never would have met if I hadn't gotten involved at an association level. Give it a thought. ■



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Golf Day Offers Legislators A Chance to Draw Breath

It has been seven years now that I have been attending Florida Golf Day and representing golf course superintendents in Tallahassee. This is always an honor. Each year Golf Day is on a different day in a different month; depending on the session.

Last year, when we arrived in Tallahassee, damage control was occurring at the Capitol after accusations

that Senator Frank Artiles made racially disparaging remarks at the Governor's Club the night before Golf Day. Artiles apologized for a verbal attack on supporters of Senate President Joe Negron but eventually resigned.

Brush fires across the state were also a hot topic and water restrictions were being enforced across the Water Management Districts. How we would willingly take back those inconveniences in lieu of the issues consuming the legislature this year.

Exhaustion and somberness is how I would describe the prevailing mood we found in the Capitol. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting had just occurred the week prior and gun legislation was the primary focus and topic of conversation across the halls.

It was apparent that golf was not high on folk's minds as we heard comments like, "This is unlike anything else we have ever dealt with" and "I have never seen the Capitol like this before." We were able to provide a small reprieve with a putting green challenge and some levity that was much appreciated. Jeff Sharkey, with the Capitol Alliance Group, did an excellent job keeping our schedule full. But it goes without saying that hearts and minds were elsewhere.

There were a lot of groups at the Capitol; from all sides of the gun debate and all walks of life. It is always a hive of activity, even at the best of times, with – I guess you could say - a lot of cross-pollination as people who know people bump into other people.

This was the case for us as we prepared to have a scheduled dinner with Will Harrell from Harrell's Fertilizers and Senator Kelly Stigel. It turns out that Harrell's government relations counsel also serves the local law enforcement folks. Next thing you know, the Florida GCSA delegation including me, president John Curran and board member Andy Jorgensen, CGCS, were in a dinner group along with Police Chief Gary Hester and Sherriff Grady Judd.

Those of you from Lakeland and Polk County are familiar with these names but I was not. Still, I was soon comfortable in their company as they entertained us with a plethora of stories. With the seriousness of the climate relevant to all of us, it was a welcome escape from the overall heartbreak of the shooting. Chief Hester and Sherriff Judd easily play off each other's stories and managed to lift everyone's spirits, including their own. The levity, laughter and storytelling offered some welcome relief and I am honored to have had a seat at the table.

I will look forward to representing the superintendents again at next year's Golf Day. It is important to remain visible and for our legislators and their staff members to know we are available when they need information. Our presence in Tallahassee matters.

Political events, current issues and legislative hot topics will pop up and always have the capability of re-arranging our visit and throwing up surprises. I hope though, that it is never again because of a tragedy anything like the unspeakable tragedy at Marjory Stoneman. ■ - Jennifer Bryan.



Golf Day representatives in Tallahassee this year with your Florida GCSA representatives beginning fourth from the right with GCSAA's Ralph Dain, president John Curran, executive director Jennifer Bryan and board member Andy Jorgensen, CGCS.

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1. **Entry is free to all chapter members.** Any current member of a Florida chapter is eligible to participate.
2. **Official Rules.** Through until the end of May, take a picture with your catch while holding a recent issue of The Florida Green magazine, and email the picture along with your name, company name, chapter, and the weight and/or length of the fish to jgbailey25@yahoo.com. There is no limit to the number of entries an angler may send. The picture must have a copy of The Florida Green magazine visible to be validated.
3. **Prizes.** All entries will be evaluated by the selection committee at the end of the Challenge. Prizes will be awarded to the largest species of fish in the following categories: Freshwater species - Largemouth Bass and Peacock Bass. Saltwater species- Redfish, Snook, Mahi-Mahi, any legal Grouper species, and any Snapper species. Special consideration will apply for all other species. Prizes will also be awarded to the angler with the most different species entered and the best picture overall. Winners will be announced in the summer issue of The Florida Green.
4. **Legal.** All participants must adhere to all state and local fishing and/or boating laws. By sending in your picture, you give permission for the Florida GCSA to use the picture in any future publications by the Florida GCSA or your local chapter.



CHAPTER ROUND UP

CALUSA



Betsy Engelbrecht with baby Eli Engelbrecht and Monica Caporini speak to the family theme at Alico Family Golf Center.



Chris Pitts from Stoney Brook Golf Club mid-round in the two-club challenge.



Ryan and Jacob Engelbrecht.



Just before game time for the Florida Everblades.



From left, Brad Caporini, Sam Yetzer, Scott LoVecchio and Landon Clark with other Calusa GCSA members ready for game time at Germain Arena.

In February, the Calusa GCSA enjoyed a fun event at Alico Family Golf Center in Fort Myers. Alico features a nine-hole short course with the longest hole about 80 yards, an 18-hole miniature golf course and a 70-bay driving range. We played a two-club only event where we had a closest to the pin on every hole and a skins game. Along with members, we had wives and children turn out as well. It was a great evening with a great turn out.

We continued the family theme mid-March with an outing to watch the Florida Everblades game at Germain

Arena. The 'Blades lost to the Orlando Solar Bears but we had our own box with a great view and hospitality for all.

On April 25, we're looking forward to taking on the Suncoast GCSA in a Ryder Cup-Style event at River Hall Country Club in Alva. This should be a lot of fun and a great chance to put our games on show. Also make a note on your calendars for our annual meeting at Pelican Preserve on June 22.

Thanks to everyone who has supported our recent events and to all the family members who came along as well.

- Jake Wentz, Verandah Club.

SEVEN RIVERS

The Seven Rivers GCSA had a great members-only event in January at Adena Golf and Country Club in Ocala hosted by golf course superintendent Asa High. We were honored to have Pat Jones, editor-in-chief of Golf Course Industry magazine, as our guest speaker. Pat provided an over an hour-long presentation on the current state of the golf industry as he sees it, reporting an overall uptick in golf participation. He also provided some unique social media communication ideas that quickly got those in attendance signing up for Snapchat and Twitter. Adena was lush and in beautiful condition for the afternoon round of golf and many thanks go out to Asa, his nine assistants and the staff for some tremendous conditions.

We would also like to honor two of our long-time Seven Rivers GCSA members.



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Tony Brown, from Mallory Hill Golf Club, and Todd Ronske, with Howard Fertilizer and Chemical, who were recently recognized at the 2018 Golf Industry Show for being certified golf course superintendents for 25 years. Both of these guys are great individuals and excellent representatives of the golf industry. We are truly privileged to have such great assets in our area. Congratulations to both of them.

April brings us back to World Woods Golf Club for the 26th annual Jeff Hayden Memorial Envirotron Golf Classic for turfgrass research. Hosted by David Court, CGCS this long-time event has raised well over \$1 million since its inception providing funds for numerous research projects throughout the state. May marks the return to the schedule of Golden Ocala Golf and Equestrian Club where host golf course superintendent Jack Creveling promises a great time. June wraps up our year with the annual meeting at Candler Hills Golf Club.

- Andy Jorgensen, CGCS On Top of the World.

FLORIDA WEST COAST



Florida West Coast GCSA members helped host superintendent Ryan Stewart prepare the course for the Valspar Championship and players like Tiger Woods.



Florida West Coast GCSA members at Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club heard from a range of speakers on regulatory compliance.

The Florida West Coast GCSA held an education seminar on March 7 at Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club. The topic for this seminar was regulatory compliance. This covered water management, water use permitting, local county landscape BMPs, compliance issues for pesticide license, Florida golf course BMPs, and national level regulatory compliance for the golf community.

The speakers for this event provided a lot of good information. It was a great event to meet with local officials and ask questions regarding compliance issues specific to our individual courses.

Thank you to all the speakers: April Breton, water use permit manager Southwest Florida Water Management District; Dalton Weinstein, hydrogeologist SFWMD; Anamarie Rivera, Pinellas County senior environmental specialist; Juli Jacoby, environmental specialist Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Dr. Brian Unruh, University of Florida; Dr. Frank Wong, Bayer.

And a special thank you to Carson Kamps and Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club for hosting this great event.

Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club hosted the PGA Tour's Valspar Championship on March 8-11. This tournament gave many West Coast members an opportunity to volunteer and get a first-hand look at the golf course and the work that goes into making a tournament possible. Golf course superintendent Ryan Stewart and his staff had the golf course in excellent condition. The tournament broke records for both television viewing audience and attendance. Thank you to the staff at Innisbrook for allowing us to volunteer and be part of this great tournament.

- Ryan Franklin, St. Petersburg Country Club

PALM BEACH



Ryan Swilley, the legendary Pete Dye, Brett Sanderson, Dave Oliver, Jon Beckman and Shane Rice at the Palm Beach Par 3.

The Palm Beach GCSA kicked off the New Year in style at PGA National with our annual superintendents only meeting. We were fortunate enough to experience the

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CHAPTER ROUND UP

Bear Trap first hand, playing the back nine of the Champion Course.

Following golf, education was provided by Brad Nelson, director of agronomy at PGA National, and Steve Ehrbar, CGCS director of golf course maintenance at Jupiter Hills Club. The main topic of discussion was the planning and preparation involved with hosting PGA Tour and USGA events. The Champion Course at PGA is the annual host of the PGA Tour's Honda Classic, and Jupiter Hills has hosted numerous USGA events, and will be the host site for the 2018 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship in May.

In early March, we hosted our assistants only meeting at Seagate Country Club. More than 40 local assistant superintendents gathered for nine holes of golf, followed by education. The education portion of this event consisted of a panel of leading industry professionals discussing career advice, networking, ways to get involved, with an open question and answer session. The panel included Bob Randquist, CGCS, Rafael Barajas, CGCS, Ralph Dain and Kevin Downing, CGCS. Special thanks to Hector Turf for sponsoring this event, and host superintendent and Palm Beach GCSA board member, Nate Watkin.

Following the assistants only meeting, we gathered again in March for our golf only event at the Palm Beach Par 3. Legendary golf course designer, Mr. Pete Dye, was able to join us for a fun afternoon on the links overlooking the ocean and intracoastal waterway. Special thanks go out to host superintendent, Tim Campbell, and his team for their



Assistant superintendents closely listen to advice from the panel of speakers at our recent assistants only meeting at Seagate Country Club.

wonderful hospitality and excellent playing conditions, as always.

National Golf Day is on April 25 on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. Palm Beach will be well represented with several area superintendents headed north to participate with golf's leading associations and industry partners. In addition to a community service project at the National Mall, participants will have the opportunity to meet with members of Congress and discuss issues and legislation impacting our profession.

We hope everyone had a successful "season" as we wrap up our club-wide events and shift focus towards a summer full of - hopefully - good weather and cultural practices. As always, we would like to thank our vendors and superintendents for their help in supporting and promoting the mission of the Palm Beach GCSA: To create value for members by providing education and fellowship while promoting the game of golf.

At press time we were looking forward to a joint workshop on Latitude 36 with the USGA at The Loxahatchee Club early April. June 9 is our Future of Golf tournament and June 30 is our fishing tournament.

- Parker Ferren, Polo Club of Boca Raton

NORTH FLORIDA



North Florida GCSA past-presidents, back row from left: Tony Kimball (1975), Ken Arsenault (2014), Clayton Estes (1999), Bob Coffee (2010-2011), Nate Maurer (2015-2016). Front: Bill Plante (1996), Jay McCord (FTG), Chris McCranie (2009-2010).



North Florida GCSA officers and directors, back row from left: David Hillhouse, Nate Maurer, John Lammrigh, Matt Howes. Center: Keith Webb, Al Clements, Darren Bache, Ken Arsenault. Front: Anthony Baur, Betty Hooten, association manager, and Chris McCranie.

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Glen Klauk, whose name will now be on the Pablo Research Tournament he started 21 years ago, with John Lammrish and Nate Maurer.

The North Florida Chapter held our annual past-presidents dinner on January 12 with several of our past-presidents in attendance. Past-president Tony Kimball (1975) gave us some insight into some of the early years of our chapter along with some very funny and interesting stories. A great time was had by all.

On March 12, we played our Pablo Research Tournament with all proceeds going to turfgrass research in Florida. As usual the tournament was full a month in advance. We started the day with a little drizzle of rain, but by lunchtime the sky started to clear. President John Lammrish announced that this would be the last year of the Pablo Research Tournament since the tournament was being renamed The Glen Klauk Research Tournament. This tournament was started 21 years ago by Glen and the board thought it was only fitting that his name be on the event.

At press time we were looking forward to our next event, the Memorial Scholarship Tournament on April 9 at LPGA International in Daytona Beach. This tournament supports our scholarship grants which we award at the tournament. Great Fun and fellowship is always had by everyone.

- Betty Hooten, association manager

RIDGE



Mike Heard of Beard Equipment keeps track of proceedings at the skeet shoot in Polk City.



Dr. Raymond Snyder addresses Ridge GCSA members during their visit to Harrell's Lakeland facility.

The Ridge GCSA has been busy this winter. In December, many members met up as Beard Equipment and Mike Heard hosted superintendents of the Ridge and surrounding chapters to a skeet shoot in Polk City. The event was an awesome social gathering designed to strengthen relationships amongst turfgrass professionals. The food, facility and atmosphere were awesome and a nice change of pace.

After the first of the year, Lone Palm Golf Club and superintendent, Mike Caudill, graciously hosted the Ridge member-vendor tournament. The course was fantastic and Todd Lowe's educational piece, "Trends in Turfgrass Management" was timely following a unique 2017 season.

Special thanks to Richard Kirkland with Southeast Partners for being an awesome advocate for superintendents and the

chapters he serves. Richard sponsored and brought many non-member superintendents within the Ridge territory to the event. His efforts helped to increase our membership numbers and aid in bridging the lines of communications between peers. These networks only make us stronger. Thanks Richard.

Later in February, Harrell's sponsored an educational event at their corporate headquarters in Lakeland. This event was one of our largest attended with more than 20 superintendents participating. Dr. Raymond Snyder gave a presentation about "The Role of Biostimulants in Turf Management." Attendees earned Florida pesticide CEUs as well as GCSAA CEUs. The lecture was complemented by an awesome question and answer session and roundtable discussion followed by a tour of the production plant and warehouse.

Special thanks to Dr. Snyder, Lee Crosby, Sean Klotzbach, Jason Frank, Jack Harrell III and all the Harrell's team for the hospitality and continued support, not only of the Ridge GCSA, but the entire industry.

Looking ahead, if you haven't already signed up, the Ridge Invitational is April 26. This is our largest fundraising event with proceeds going to support turfgrass research as well as the YMCA of Lakeland Youth Golf Program. The event is played over an 18-hole par 3 course, hosted at Grasslands Golf and Country Club. Come have some fun and try your chance at a hole-in-one with a cash prize on every hole.

- Adam Ellison, Grasslands Golf and Country Club.

SUNCOAST

The Suncoast GCSA has plenty to look forward in the coming weeks. On April 23, we head to Sara Bay Country Club in Sarasota for the 36th annual Suncoast Scramble. We anticipate another wonderful event that is our biggest fundraiser of the year.

The Suncoast GCSA board sincerely

CHAPTER ROUND UP

appreciates the support of our sponsors, who help enable our association to improve our service to our members and to fund worthwhile projects, including scholarships for deserving turfgrass students, junior golf programs and turfgrass research. Thanks also to our host superintendent Bob Gwodz and his staff for having us.

In addition to golf on a great course, we're proud to offer a top-of-the-line panel of speakers that is sure to deliver some take home messages for everyone. Our panel features Tom Alex, CGCS, owner and operator of Alex Golf Services; Tim Hiers, CGCS, director of agronomy at The Club at Mediterra; Armen Suny, search and consulting executive at Kopplin, Kuebler and Wallace; and John Cunningham, CGCS, general manager and chief operating officer at Aronimink Golf Club in PA.

Two days later, the Suncoast GCSA takes on the Calusa GSCA in a Ryder Cup-style challenge at River Hall Country Club in Alva, thanks to host superintendent Kyle Cheek. This event is open to superintendents and vendors and is sure to be a lot of fun as we compete for bragging rights.

That's a busy period in a short-time frame but we've already been busy this year. In March, we enjoyed a social event and something a little different with a sporting clay outing at Knights Trail Park. This event was free to all Suncoast GCSA members and we had a great turnout. Sporting clay shooting, sometimes described as "golf with a gun," is a form of clay pigeon shooting. It differs from trap and skeet shooting in that it involves shooting targets at multiple locations and those targets are thrown from machines in a variety of trajectories, angles, speeds, elevations, and distances.

Mid-January we got together with members of the Florida West Coast GCSA for an afternoon of Topgolf in Tampa. For those of you who haven't tried it, Topgolf is a lot of fun and can be played by anyone regardless of experience. It could prove to be a helpful introduction to the game for a lot of people. Earlier in the day we heard from motivational speaker

John Cassis who talked about the art of leadership and mental toughness, effective communication and adapting to change.

- Dan Haubein, Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club.

CENTRAL FLORIDA



Golf winners at Orange Tree Golf Club were Tim Allen, Tad Burnett, Chad Sartain and Chester VandenBerg.



The stylish tee markers given away by Custom Golf Products.

Congratulations to Chris Flynn and his staff on a wonderful tournament at Bay Hill Club and Lodge this year. Conditions were great. Mid-March we enjoyed an outing at Orange Tree Golf Club thanks to host Rob Torri. We played a modified stableford event with a field of 67 players made up of 28 superintendents and 39 vendors.

The winning team with a score of 93 was Tim Allen, PBI Gordon; Tad Burnett, Dusenberry Golf; Chad Sartain, Global Turf Equipment; and Chester VandenBerg, Dow AgroSciences.

Our drink cart was sponsored by Custom Golf Products and they gave away a set of tee markers. The lucky superintendent to

claim that prize was Mitch Leininger from Shingle Creek Golf Club. A 50/50 raffle to raise money for Arnie's Army was won by Mike Agate, who graciously donated his winnings to the fund.

- Lisa McDowell.

TREASURE COAST

The Treasure Coast GCSA once again sponsored EcoFest at the Environmental Learning Center in Wabasso. As the premier sponsor we have center stage for the public that comes to visit and learn about nature.

When the public comes to Ecofest to learn about what the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission does, or what a soil conservation scientist does, or the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute or about dolphin research in the lagoon, they also get a chance to speak to golf course superintendents and learn what we do. They learn that as land managers we only use pesticides where and when we need to, how we recycle water, filter runoff... you have heard the story. It gives us the one-on-one chance to explain or defend what we do.

We have displayed some interesting golf course photos with messages beneath them. The caption may read something simple like, Habitat or Water Filter. It gets a conversation started.

We also brought along Roger Van Dyke, golf professional from the Indian River Golf Foundation, who teaches SNAG golf to kids. Roger has oversized clubs and tennis balls that are hit to targets. For many of the children this is their first exposure to the game and Roger makes it fun. As a matter of fact, when sponsorship is discussed the ELC specifically asks for Roger and the SNAG golf because it's such a big hit with the children.

This year's Blue Pearl Charity Tournament is being hosted by Dick Gray at PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie on May 15. Dick was one of the founders of this tournament and the inspiration behind the name of the event. Dick said our planet looks like a "blue pearl" from space and it's our job,

our responsibility, to polish the pearl, take care of it and pass it on to our children in better shape than we found it.

- Craig Weyandt, *The Moorings at Hawk's Nest*.

EVERGLADES

The Everglades GCSA board of directors is excited about the prospect of a new relationship with TESTA, the Turf Equipment Service Technicians Association. A lot of groundwork is being laid to help equipment managers with their education and professional development. So, keep an eye out soon for more details on efforts to highlight the important role service technicians play in our operations.

At press time, we were looking forward to our annual Spring Symposium at Naples Golf and Beach Hotel on April 12. This is always a great event at a great venue. And, of course, we will back there for the Poa Annuu Golf Classic and G.C. Horn Memorial Tournament from May 17 to 20.

In January, we had a good turn out at what is a tough time of year for the 5th annual G.C. Horn Memorial Turfgrass Seminar at Naples Conference Center. This was our first time at this facility and it was very well received.

We had a strong slate of speakers who covered a wide range of topics. They were Todd Lowe -

lessons from Irma, Dr. Bryan Unruh - year in review what we learned and what to expect; Dr.

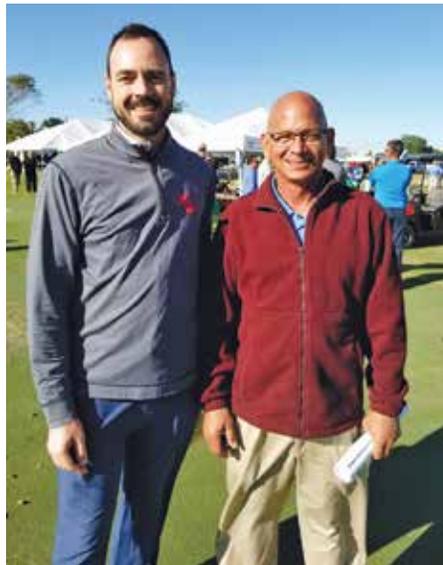
Doug Caldwell - landscape and tree damage from hurricanes; Dr. Travis Shaddox - soil and tissue testing, Stephen Myers - drones and remote sensing in turfgrass management, Jeremy Wharton - OSHA and safety compliance.

Our dinner meeting at Club Pelican Bay on March 20 also featured good education. Brenda Brooks, executive director of Crew Land and Water Trust, spoke on water issues in the southwest and explained their education and outreach programs. It was good to be back at Club Pelican

Bay for this event after their remodeling of the clubhouse. It was also good to see more wives attend. The board made their attendance free this year as a token of appreciation for the patience and support they provide so many of our superintendent members.

-Tyler Casey, *West Bay Club*.

SOUTH FLORIDA



Jason Bailey and Roly Molina attended the 30th annual South Florida Turfgrass Field Day and Expo at the UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center.



Eric von Hofen and Ralph Dain were also among attendees.

The South Florida GCSA is proud to announce – and “administer” – the first annual Florida GCSA Fishing Challenge. Whether you are a weekend warrior on the water or keep a pole in the back of your golf cart, you are invited to participate in this challenge where bragging rights are on the line, as well as a lot of fish we hope.

Rules are simple. Through until the end of May, catch one of the qualifying species, take a picture holding the fish with an issue of The Florida Green magazine, and email the picture along with the weight of the fish, your name, and your local chapter name to Jason Bailey at jbailey25@yahoo.com. There is also an ad for the challenge in this issue of the magazine.

Prizes will be awarded in a number of categories, including best picture - sounds like the Oscars! - and winners will be announced, and featured in the summer issue of The Florida Green. Winners will be based on the judges “score” and not just how big or long the fish is - we all know how fisherman are. Winners will receive a Florida GCSA logoed fishing shirt. We expect these will become very valuable over time but until some past winners start selling them on e-bay we’re hoping there won’t be much fibbing since there is no money involved.

Tight lines everyone.

- Jason Bailey, *Parkland Golf and Country Club*.



Jason Zimmerman and Bryce Koch, CGCS were among superintendents who traveled from as far west as the Everglades GCSA and as far north as the Treasure Coast GCSA.

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Florida Gets Third Leader AT GCSAA WITH DAVIS

There is a sign posted at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples that reads “Home of the 82nd president of GCSAA.” That president of course is Darren Davis, CGCS but the sign was posted by his counterpart in the pro shop. Tom Wildenhaus is on the PGA of America board of controls and candidate for secretary when the PGA holds its own elections in November. His own pride at Davis’ election is shared across the club.

“My counterpart is great. He wants to celebrate it,” Davis says. “And my members have embraced it equally as much.” Wildenhaus made sure Olde Florida’s members were fully aware by distributing an article from GCM magazine, detailing Davis’ career and election during GCSAA’s annual meeting in San Antonio, TX in February.

Since then Davis has been inundated with congratulations from well-wishers far and wide, and of course, close to home. He says the phone calls, emails, text messages and note cards have numbered in the hundreds. “I did not expect that,” he says. “It’s a privilege to represent the profession and the industry, so my response has been, really, to say, ‘No, thank you. It’s my honor.’”

Members have also called by his maintenance facility to shake hands and his regular walk-throughs in the clubhouse are taking longer than usual. The walk-throughs, where Davis makes himself available to members, normally take five to 15 minutes. On one lunch time visit soon after his election he spent 20 minutes at a single table.

That news wouldn’t surprise Bob Randquist, CGCS from Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, who led GCSAA as president in 2011. He tells of an occasion, about a week after he appeared on the Golf Channel during the telecast of The Masters when a member, who is now on the green committee, waved him over at Boca Rio. “He said, ‘I saw your interview during The Masters,’” Randquist recalls. “He said, ‘I just want you to know I have never been prouder to be a member of this club.’”

Randquist expects Davis’ experience will be the same. “Many of our members have served on boards at high levels, whether corporate or charitable or often both,” he says. “They understand

Darren Davis, CGCS overlooking the trade show floor at the Golf Industry Show in San Antonio, TX.



the importance of volunteerism and they value and respect that commitment.”

Davis and Randquist are two of only three superintendents from the Sunshine State to lead GCSAA since it formed in 1926. The first was Gary Grigg, who founded Grigg Brothers, now Grigg, who served in 1995. Grigg and Davis may be 23 years apart in their presidencies, but they have been close since they first met in 1992.

Both men were superintendents of golf courses that were under construction at the time just 10 miles apart, Grigg at Naples National and Davis at Olde Florida. “I was impressed with Darren from the first time I met him,” Grigg says. “And he’s been a really good friend ever since. He will be an excellent president. He’s smart, he’s articulate and he’s a good man. GCSAA members are fortunate to have him. He will definitely help get us further down the road.”

Grigg says his best advice to Davis during his term is simply to “enjoy it.” “It’s advice I wish I had taken when I was president,” he laughs. “When you get older it can be easier to get a grasp on the big picture perspective. But at the time the demands on your time are immense. I don’t think the average member has any understanding of what it takes to serve on the board, then as committee chairs, let alone as president. You’re wanted everywhere.”

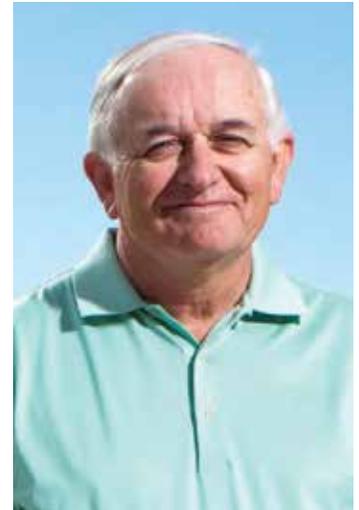
In that respect, Davis believes he is as prepared as possible. “My job at Olde Florida is conducive to the position as president,” he says. “We have a seasonal membership that wants to see their superintendent during their winter season. But I have flexibility during the rest of the year when a lot of the business of golf gets done.”

He says he has also benefited from advice he received long ago. “Surround yourself with good people and be willing to delegate,” he says. “I have to say I have a terrific staff that doesn’t miss a beat when I am not here.”

Randquist says he delegated, no just at Boca Rio but also as GCSAA president. Previous presidents advised him to exercise control of his own destiny. “My approach was to delegate some trips where it was not essential for the president to be there,” Randquist says. “We had very good people



Gary Grigg led GCSAA in 1995.



Bob Randquist, CGCS was GCSAA president in 2011.

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who could represent the association and, of course, a fabulous support staff at GCSAA headquarters.”

Davis has already spent a considerable amount of time on the road and had multiple trips, including to the spring board of directors meeting, the American Society of Golf Course Architects annual meeting, National Golf Day and The Masters, booked through April. “There is no question that my job, just as it is for any superintendent, is number one,” he says. “But like I said, I am fortunate to have a job that allows to me to serve as president.”

Of several areas Davis says will demand focus this year, perhaps the most pressing is the supply of future superintendents. The industry downturn post-recession, course closures and a tightening job market served as a disincentive to students who might otherwise have chosen a career in golf course maintenance. “It’s vital we find ways to promote and encourage individuals to work on a golf course,” he says. “We hope they find the passion and a love for it.”

Davis says while he represents every member of GCSAA he remains mindful that he represents the Florida GCSA. Davis is a past-president of the Everglades GCSA and a past-president of the Florida GCSA and Florida Turfgrass Association. He is currently a director with the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation. “I have fond memories of my board service in Florida,” he says. “I’m very grateful for the opportunities and the support I have had from the state.”

Making up for lost time, Florida is on schedule to have its fourth GCSAA president next year after Rafael Barajas, CGCS from Boca Grove Plantation in Boca Raton was elected vice-president. Kevin Sunderman from Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club in St. Petersburg was elected to serve a two-year term on the board of directors, a seat he occupied the previous year as a president’s appointment.

In other news from the Golf Industry Show, nearly 300 people attended the annual Florida GCSA Reception at Barriba Cantina and The County Line in San Antonio’s River Walk District. It was a great turnout so far from home and an extra special night for Tom Wiegele of PNC Equipment Finance. Wiegele was the lucky winner of a raffle for a \$500 gift certificate towards cowboy boots and a cowboy hat.

Clayton Estes, CGCS from San Jose Country Club won \$1,000 in a 50-50 drawing then immediately gave the money back to the association. Estes asked that the money be forwarded to the family of longtime superintendent now consultant, Mark Black, CGCS. Word filtered through the reception earlier in the evening that Black’s son, “Teak”, had died suddenly. It was generous gesture by Estes that speaks to the bond that exists within the association and the superintendent fraternity.

Florida GCSA director Steve Wright, CGCS from Pine Tree Golf Club in Boynton Beach was also a winner during GIS. Wright won in the category of best twitter feed in Golf Course Industry magazine’s annual Super Social Media Awards. The awards are presented in partnership with Aquatrols.

Earlier, Seth Strickland from Miami Shores Country Club was in



Pat Jones, left, congratulates Steve Wright, CGCS on winning Golf Course Industry magazine’s award for best twitter feed.

the running to win his fourth GCSAA Golf Championship right until the very end. One shot back of the leader overnight, Strickland was tied for the lead after 10 holes in the final round. He was only one shot back after 15 before disaster struck on the par three 16th. A triple bogey there put him two shots back of eventual winner Matt Cowan from Austin, TX.

Strickland then bounced back strongly with a birdie on No. 17 while Cowan four-putted for double-bogey, sending them to the 18th tee in a tie. A failed chip shot led to a bogey for Strickland while Cowan made par for the win, his second GCSAA championship. Strickland finished in a tie for second and has now been close several times since the last of his three wins in 2009.

Strickland was also a member of the Florida No. 1 team that finished second in the annual team championship by the narrowest of margins, finishing with a score of 246 in the stableford event, just one point behind the Lone Star No. 1 that included Cowan. Strickland’s teammates were Bryce Koch, CGCS from Cypress Lake Country Club, Michael Kelly from Gulf Harbour Yacht and Country Club, Deron Zendt from Banyan Golf Club and Jim Torba from Pelican Preserve Golf Club.

Florida No. 2 team also recorded a top 10 in the gross event finishing ninth of 31 teams. Team members were Jason Bagwell from Gleneagles Country Club, John Spiwak from Eastpointe Country Club, Stuart Bothe from Vanderbilt Country Club, Thomas Caliguire from Forest Glen Golf and Country Club and Gregg Caspio from Cypress Lake Country Club.

Mark Reid from The Breakers was one clear winner for Florida, as victor in the gross division of the Classic III event.

Next year’s Golf Industry Show is in San Diego, CA from February 2 to 7.

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Craig Weyandt, The Moorings at Hawk's Nest Golf Club.



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Bryce Koch, CGCS Cypress Lake Country Club.



Phil Garside, Olde Hickory Golf and Country Club; Mark Jacobs, Shell Point Golf Club; Jeff Burgoyne, Legends Golf and Country Club; Robin Wicker, Geonics; and Mark Thomas, Kelly Greens Golf and Country Club.



Jason Zimmerman, CGCS Pelican's Nest Golf Club; and Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan.



Andy Jorgensen, CGCS On Top of the World; and Dr. Amir Varshovi, Green Technologies.



Billy Huskins, CGCS Highland Woods Golf and Country Club; Kevin Small, Brook Hollow Golf Club, TX; Bob Randquist, CGCS Boca Rio Golf Club; and Scott Hamm, CGCS Haig Point Golf Club, SC.

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Melody and Wayne Kappauf, CGCS Island Country Club.



Todd Kranz from Minnesota and Aaron Ohloff, Wyndemere Country Club.



Bob Bittner, CGCS The Club at Pelican Bay; Clayton Estes, CGCS San Jose Country Club; and Steve Wright, CGCS Pine Tree Golf Club.



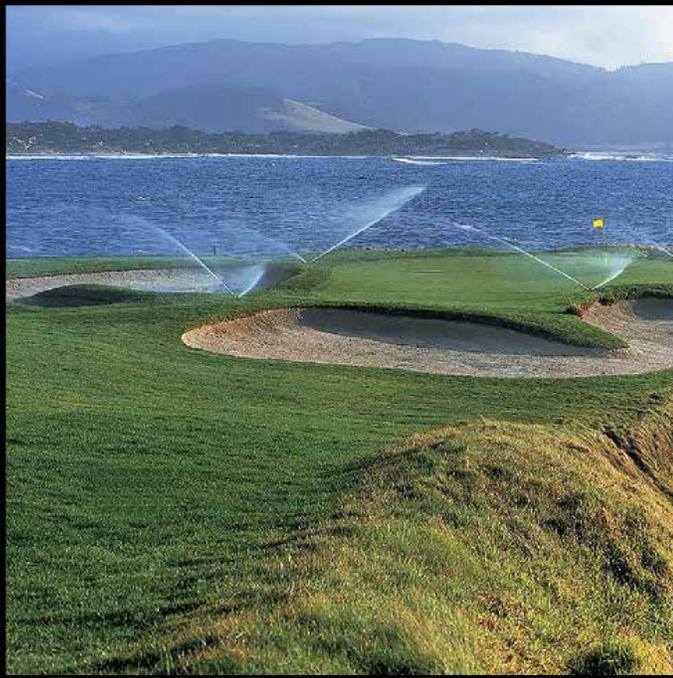
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Bill Davidson, CGCS inside the maintenance facility at the Country Club of Naples.

Davidson Throws Open DOORS TO FRESH EYES

If Bill Davidson gets a new golf course maintenance facility at the Country Club of Naples in the next few years he might have his wife to thank, at least indirectly. “She has this theory that having a big party at your house at least once a year helps keep it clean,” Davidson says. “Because you go to all sorts of trouble when you know you have people coming.”

Recently, Davidson, CGCS did something most superintendents would never do, maybe because it wouldn’t occur to them. But maybe also because of its potential to make them vulnerable. He invited someone over, not to party, but instead to make a thorough inspection of every inch and every aspect of his facility, at least operationally.

After 10 years in his current role, Davidson wondered if he was seeing all he needed to see. “Longevity can breed comfortability and lead to stagnation,” he says. “I felt like it was time to take a good hard look and see if there were things we weren’t doing as well as we could.”

If his wife’s clean-house theory was swimming around in the back of his head, there was another catalyst for action right there at the clubhouse in new general manager, Gregg Osborn. Davidson was contemplating Osborn coming on board, seeing everything for the first time, when he flipped roles.

“I was thinking about how much energy and zest he was going to bring to his new job as he looked to make an impression,” Davidson says. “Then it occurred to me, what would I do now if I was new to my job. What impetus could I bring to impress him?” The

club was also about to have a new president and new green committee chair. The time seemed ripe for cleaning slates.

Davidson commissioned longtime golf course maintenance icon turned consultant, Mark Black, to come and serve as fresh eyes. Agronomics aside, it was an all-access invitation. Black could go anywhere, look in any drawer, speak to any staff member and ask any question he wanted. “Whatever rocks he found, he was absolutely free to turn over,” Davidson says.

The move was unconventional to say the least. As Black himself wrote in his subsequent 11-page report, “This would be a bold step for most superintendents as anyone, at any time, can walk into any operation and find fault. I applaud Bill for his professional maturity to ask for criticism from an outside source.”

That said, Black was indeed being asked to find fault and he didn’t take long to provide his first jolt. When Davidson asked for any early impressions, Black offered a blunt, “I think you need to clean up this place.” Davidson might have been shocked, after all, he’d brought the maintenance facility a long, long way in his time. But his eyebrows soon returned to their normal level.

“I wasn’t asking Mark how it looked compared to when I got here,” Davidson says. “I was asking him how it looked to him, now. I wanted him to find us those things that make the difference between being really good and being great. Your vision dulls when you’re seeing it every day.”

The difference between criticism and constructive criticism can

sometimes come down to how you listen. Fully aware of that distinction, Davidson was determined to hear everything Black said without fear or defensiveness.

“I made sure I went into this with the right mindset,” he says. “I invited Mark in because he is an expert. He’s seen an awful lot. His impressions were what I wanted. I wasn’t going to view them as arguable.”

Davidson admits being “a little shocked” at some results from Black’s inspection, performed over two days last fall. “But with others, it was like, ‘Oh, yeah. I can see that now.’” One of Black’s key recommendations called for improved employee training and record keeping.

Another highlighted shortcomings of the maintenance facility itself. Built in 1990, it was by today’s standards, Black reported, too small and inadequate for efficient operations. Black has experience designing maintenance facilities incorporating safety, functionality, efficiency, organization and “the zonal concept.” He is in advocate of a clean work environment, which he says directly influences staff morale.

Of course, there was more to his report but the details don’t matter in the context of Davidson sharing his experience with other superintendents who might consider a similar form of professional introspection. What matters, Davidson says, is that he now has a road map for improvement.



Mark Black with the Ike Grainger Award he received from the USGA Green Section in 2013.

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“If you want to be the best you need to do what the best do, even if it’s just the last five percent,” he says. “They manage to take care of that five percent because they decide to make it important. I wanted to know how close we were to that level.”

As for throwing himself open to criticism, Davidson says that’s a lesson he learned from mentors such as Tim Hiers, CGCS now at the Club at Mediterra, and Matt Taylor, CGCS, now a neighbor at Royal Poinciana. “They taught me that it’s okay to ask for help, to ask for another set of eyes,” Davidson says. “I saw it first working for Tim. He was willing to ask and hear from anybody. It wasn’t always the expert.”

It’s one thing to know intellectually that calling for fresh eyes makes sense and to feel secure enough that the results won’t be threatening. But Davidson concedes there was still a hump he had to get over. “As superintendents, doing something like this can be difficult,” he says. “We’re the guys who are supposed to have all the answers all the time. Asking for help is sometimes perceived as a sign of weakness but really, it’s not. Really, I’d hope it’s the opposite.”

Davidson and Black decided on some key parameters at the outset, such as how long the process would take and how much it would cost. Black submitted his report within a week of stepping on property. Davidson and the club mostly let the information sit through the season, so as not to inadvertently rock a ship everyone believed was sailing along very nicely. But this summer, Davidson intends to deep dive into Black’s recommendations, instituting changes and getting any kinks worked out before golfers return in the fall.

Wheels did begin to turn almost immediately though on the subject of the club maintenance facility, which Black wrote would be considered “normal” for something built around 30 years ago: “Meaning, it was located on the least desirable piece of property and normally the least amount of square footage you could surrender for ‘the barn.’”

To that point, Davidson hadn’t considered the possibility of a new headquarters for his operation. The club had made significant investments in so many other areas including \$7.6 million on a new clubhouse in time for the club’s 50th anniversary in 2016. “When Mark asked me if I’d thought about renovating the facility, I said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Why not?’ and I told him I thought the members would be reluctant.”

But when Davidson shared Black’s findings with senior club officials the response was close to dismay. It didn’t seem right for a world-class club in all other aspects to have an aged, sub-par maintenance building.

“Mark’s report spurred real discussion in the context of the total facility goals,” Davidson says. “When you think about how valuable the golf course is and how important it is to how members enjoy the club, everything that runs through maintenance facility is the lifeblood of all of that. We need to remember that it’s the golf course maintenance facility, not think of it as ‘the barn,’ the forgotten zone.” ■

- Trent Bouts

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SWILLEY FINDS HOME AFTER DYE CAST IN HIS FAVOR

By Trent Bouts

When Ryan Swilley, left, made his first visit to Gulf Stream Golf Club he wasn't sure there would be another. Regardless, he left knowing he'd just made a memory of a lifetime. As he drove away, he went over the experience in his mind time and again, seeking to retain every detail.

Shortly before, Swilley was standing on the sea wall alongside the 18th fairway staring out over the North Atlantic. He'd just toured the course Donald Ross designed in 1924, which would be special enough in its own right. But there, right beside Swilley with no one else in sight, was another legendary golf course architect, Pete Dye.

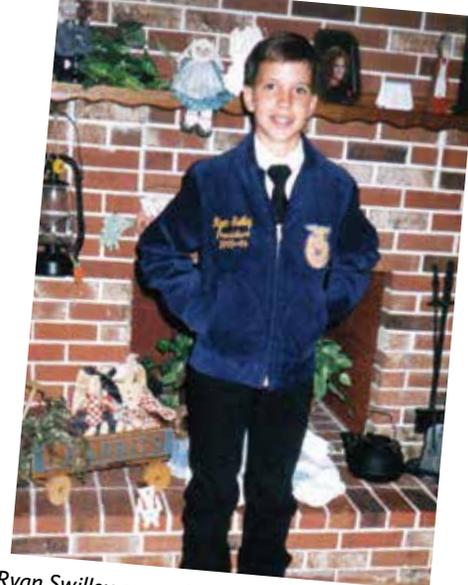
Dye, who had just driven Swilley around every inch of the golf course, was in no hurry. He talked about all sorts of things, including some tales from his time in paratrooper training for the 82nd Airborne during World War Two. Swilley says it was like being in the company of his "long-lost grandfather."

"Mr. Dye was telling me the most interesting stories and we were getting to know each other on a personal level," Swilley says. "I was taking in every word but at the same time, the only thought I had in my head was how much I would pay for someone to snap a photo of me and Pete Dye standing there....so it wouldn't be a fish story at the end of the day."

Swilley was there that day, at Dye's behest, for an informal job interview. At the time, he was assistant superintendent to Al Clements at Old Marsh Golf Club, about half an hour north along I-95. After five and a half years at Old Marsh and with Clements' full support, Swilley had been job hunting, interviewing at several facilities. Gulf Stream wasn't on the radar.



Wrangler, a steer raised by Ryan Swilley, accepts a hug before being shown at the Florida Strawberry Festival.



Ryan Swilley as president of the J.F. St. Martin Chapter of the Future Farmers of America.

But then one day, Old Marsh general manager Michael Gibson called Swilley suggesting it would be in his best interests to send a resume over to Gulf Stream. Then came the call from Dye, who held the club dearer than most of the hundreds he'd been involved with over the years. He was a member at Gulf Stream, had been for decades, and crafted a renovation of the course in 2012-'13.

Swilley was "humbled" by the invitation but didn't really expect to win the job. In relative terms, he was a kid, at 30, and had never been *the* superintendent anywhere. Several clubs without the cachet of Gulf Stream had already passed him over. But Dye was impressed. Before long Swilley was back at the club, after all, for what became close to a two-hour session with the board of directors. Dye also sat at the table, at the same time he was, metaphorically at least, in Swilley's corner.

"Walking away, waiting to hear, I certainly felt like I had found somewhere I could call home," Swilley recalls. "In all honesty it felt sort of seamless. It sort of felt right. Questions came, and the answers were there. It just felt like the start of a great relationship."

That was at the end of 2013. Today, Swilley is very much at home at Gulf Stream. "I'm so grateful for a club of this caliber to take a chance on a young guy," he says. "Every day since I've come in here and approached the job from the angle that I don't take it

lightly. As much as I enjoy what I do and love to have fun, I really feel a pressure to produce and live up to my end of the deal. But Mr. Dye never built a golf course that he felt was finished and I approach every day like that. We'll never come in and say, 'Okay, we're done.'"

You might think Swilley's fate was sealed, growing up on a farm in a town called Plant City. Surely, with a background like that his future was in agronomics. But his initial direction was towards medicine. While studying at Hillsborough Community College, he applied to chiropractor schools as far away as Texas.

Waiting to hear back, Swilley wandered by a booth at a career day and picked up a brochure about the University of Florida's turf program. "I read that material and it was almost as if a light bulb went off," he says. "I thought I love this game - that I'm lousy at but would love to get better at - and I know how to grow stuff. Why can't I start farming for aesthetics instead of farming for yield?"

Swilley enrolled at UF, studying under Dr. Grady Miller, now at North Carolina State University. While there, he interned with David Court at Black Diamond Ranch in Lecanto. "David really inspired me to continue to dig and translate what I thought I had learned in school to a real-world application on the golf course," Swilley says. "The knowledge he possessed from ornamental, turf and business, was just unlike anything I've ever seen. One of the

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most talented guys I've met. I was so honored to learn from him that summer."

During his internship, Swilley found a position advertised on TurfNet for a second assistant superintendent at Old Marsh Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens. He got an interview with Al Clements. When his internship was done soon after, he headed back to Plant City and waited to hear back from Clements.

As the summer baked on, Swilley began to sweat that the call from Clements might never come. He started firing off applications "anywhere and everywhere" but nothing led anywhere. As fall rolled around, Swilley plunged into two weeks of study then sat for his license to sell life insurance. "I needed to do something," he says. "I didn't know how to sit still. I had to make some money."

Swilley remembers that it was a Wednesday that he picked up his license and was in a meeting to receive his first set of leads from a company called National Agents Alliance, or NAA. He wasn't there five minutes when his phone rang. He stepped out to take the call. It was Clements offering Swilley the position after all. Swilley never turned around and by the Monday, had found a place to live, moved in and was at work ready to go before the sun was up.

"I was elated to get the call from Al," he says. "I had no passion for life insurance." That was 2008 and the start of the Great Recession. As Swilley says dryly, "It wasn't a bad year to get out of selling annuities. I'm sure it was not a good run for whoever walked into NAA next. They probably ended up going to AA after that!"

Conversely, Swilley couldn't have been happier, even though his new boss was a Georgia Bulldog fan and Swilley was a Gator, through and through. Clements, Swilley says, had "one of the best agronomic minds."

"Al told me early on that he'd give me enough rope to hang myself," Swilley says. "He was very involved but really promoted the assistants to manage the team and the day-to-day operations. He was very passionate about the game and we rode the golf course a lot together, sharing ideas. Every day, he treated it like a pop quiz. 'Okay, these are conditions, what do we do with the spray sheet based on that, what do we do with the cut?' It was always a critical thinking exercise to make sure we were thinking on our toes."

Old Marsh is also a Pete Dye design and it was there that Swilley



Proud owner of the grand champion hog at the 1996 Florida Strawberry Festival, Ryan Swilley, with festival president, Roy Parke.

first encountered the architect. But it was Clements and general manager Gibson who were pushing Swilley's career barrow. "I know Al and Michael were both in my corner, promoting me," he says. Swilley started at Gulf Stream on January 1, 2014 and for the first few months learned the ropes from Mark Henderson, who had been the superintendent there for 17 years.

Swilley says Henderson, now with Golf Agronomics, is "a gentleman's gentleman." "He went out of his way to show me the ropes with the property, really aiding in the transition, answering any question that I had. He was so supportive of me and continues to be. He did everything he could to make me feel comfortable." There has been similar support from other veteran superintendents in the area like Peter Brooks, CGCS at The Everglades Club and Jeff Klontz at The Country Club of Florida.

Today, Swilley's responsibilities extend beyond the golf course, where he manages about 100 acres of maintained turf with the help of two assistants, two mechanics and 18 crew members. He is secretary of the Palm Beach GCSA and serves as a grassroots ambassador in GCSAA's program to build ties with legislators in every Congressional District in the country.

In those roles, as he does on the job, Swilley is finding that a lot of non-agronomic learning he did as a kid is serving him well. To say he had a rounded and grounded education is an understatement.

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**“Those early years set me up to never quit and learn to be humble...”
– Ryan Swilley.**



Losing his father at 15, Swilley took a part time job at Plant City’s only hardware store. “It was one of those stores where there was nothing else around, so we carried one of everything, at least one,” he says.

The store sold everything from pea shellers to galvanized pipe, cow feed to fishing bait. In time, Swilley learned enough that: “The owner of the store basically gave me the keys to the kingdom. I managed the store, managed ordering, settled the drawers at the end of the night, made deposits. He really allowed me to have a hands-on experience at running the entire business.”

Swilley also learned customer relations in that small-town way that doesn’t simply exercise the transaction but establishes relationships. “Everyone came through that hardware store,” says. “I can’t even begin to express the amount of influence that place had on my life, it’s incredible. It’s something I look back on that was really a crucial thing I look back on in my life. It armed me with so many tools to be successful at a young age, really. Practical experience that most people aren’t afforded.”

But as a farm boy, in the fifth generation of farmers, Swilley understood practicalities from the outset. The family grew collard greens, zucchini and citrus, even though Plant City bills itself as the strawberry capital of the world. His father also encouraged Swilley to raise animals, covering any expenses with money he earned on the farm. To keep track, his father opened him a checking account and taught him how to balance a check book.

Swilley was also heavily involved with his local chapter of the Future Farmers of America, eventually becoming president. He learned parliamentary procedure, Robert’s Rules of Order and extemporaneous speaking. “All things that in eighth grade when it started, I thought was silly stuff,” he says. “But I look back now, and it wasn’t so silly.”

There were trophies for triumphs as varied as a grand champion hog, trailer backing and for his quarterback play. But two knee injuries put an end to his football career, and like the loss of his father, reminded him that nothing is either guaranteed or permanent.

“Those early years set me up to never quit and learn to be humble because I’d put some grand designs on my life pretty early on, like every kid dreams to play at the next level,” he says. “It humbled me because I had a real ability to play football at the next level and God had another plan for my life.”

A plan that is serving Swilley, his wife Stephanie, son Ashton, 3, and daughter, Kendall, five months, well. But not one he takes for granted. “As much as I worked hard to get here, and I’m grateful, it’s hard to feel like you deserve to be here when you see how many good people can get left behind in this business,” he says. “I think that’s why I’m so motivated to take it seriously and not squander the opportunity. To this day, I have friends and colleagues that haven’t been fortunate enough to get the same shot, the same opportunities. I think about that all the time.” ■



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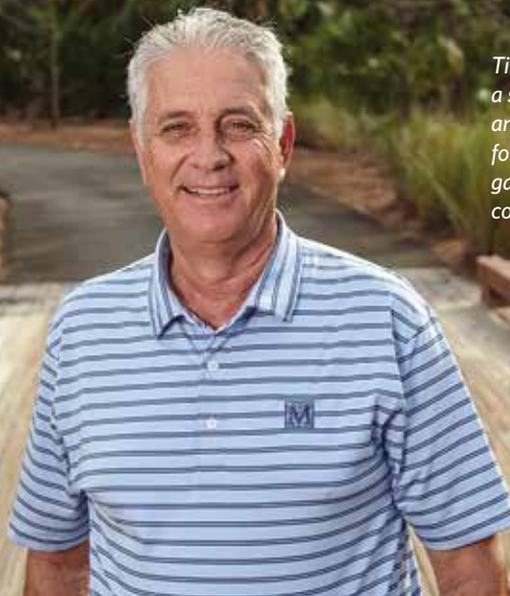
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USGA Honors Hiers for "TREMENDOUS" IMPACT



Tim Hiers, CGCS became a superintendent in 1976 and has been advocating for the profession and the game ever since. (Photo courtesy: USGA)

Tim Hiers was the founding president of the Florida GCSA in 1978. By 1986, he'd done enough to earn the association's Distinguished Service Award. In 2002, he received the President's Award for Lifetime Service. Today, 16 years later, he's still a driving force and having to find room for more honors on his shelf.

Most recently, Hiers received the USGA Green Section Award, one of the USGA's blue ribbon honors. It has been presented annually since 1962 to individuals recognizing "distinguished service to the game of golf through his or her work with turfgrass, including research, maintenance and other areas that positively impact the landscape upon which golf is played."

For his part, Hiers was "quite surprised" ... making him about the only one. To everyone else who knows him and his work, which is an awful lot of people across the breadth of the golf industry, not just the superintendent profession, the award was, if anything, overdue.

"From the USGA perspective, his advocacy of golf courses and the important role they play in the environment has been tremendous," Todd Lowe, USGA agronomist, says on a video tribute to Hiers produced by the USGA. "He's been tremendous with local superintendents and state legislators and state policy makers and others in the industry."

Lowe's sentiments were echoed on the video by the likes of fellow superintendents Matt Taylor, CGCS from Royal Poinciana Golf Club, Kyle Sweet, CGCS from The Sanctuary Golf Club and Mark Black, now the owner of J. Mark Black Consulting. Golf course architects Jan Bel Jan and Tom Fazio also weighed in with congratulations and high praise.

"I'm very appreciative to receive this award," says Hiers, about to start his fourth year as director of agronomy at The Club at Mediterra in Naples. "Usually, it goes to someone in the research field. They are the people who break the ground and let us know what is worth pursuing on the golf course."

Hiers' respect for researchers and the science they produce underpins his work on the golf course. "Science," he says, "stands the test of time. If you're making decisions based on emotion and taste, then that's going to be dependent on the last meal you had."

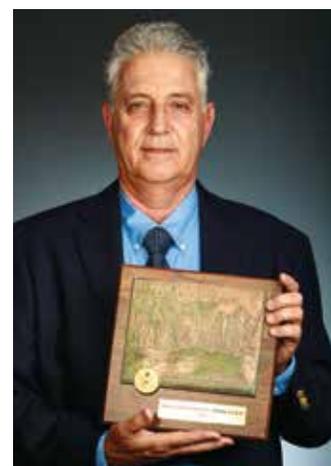
It's science that Hiers has used in a career advancing golf's sustainability and educating the golfing and non-golfing public alike about the merits of golf courses. In that respect, he also is grateful to the USGA for its efforts funding research efforts. He believes the golf industry has made significant progress challenging misperceptions about the industry. "But it's like exercising, eating right and flossing your teeth," he says. "If you don't keep doing it, you're going to have issues."

Hiers grew up in Palatka and fell in love with golf in a cow pasture across the road. He remembers hitting his first golf shot there in 1964. There were no bunkers of course but there was at least one hazard, "a big bull that I had to watch out for." It wouldn't surprise anyone who knows Hiers that, by observation, he soon learned the grazing pattern of the cattle so he could safely schedule his practice sessions while the bull was far away.

He graduated from Lake City Community College, now Florida Gateway, becoming a superintendent in 1976. He later led Collier's Reserve in Naples to become the first to achieve designation as an Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary. Later, at The Old Collier Golf Club, he secured the first Gold Sanctuary status. There, he was also the first superintendent to cover a golf course with paspalum, something he did when he arrived at Mediterra.

A press release from the USGA announcing annual awards said Hiers "stands at the forefront of golf's environmental opportunities and challenges, while also driving advances in golf course management. An avid and articulate educator, he frequently hosts visitors ranging from school field trips to scientists and government officials."

Hiers received his Green Section Award at a gala dinner in Miami early February. ■



Tim Hiers, CGCS with his USGA Green Section Award. (Photo courtesy: USGA)

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In the eyes of the law, we are innocent until proven guilty. In the eyes of the public however, golf courses are often guilty until proven innocent. Recently, somewhat to the surprise of the investigators, golf and golf courses were given the all-clear.

Researchers from the Ocean Research and Conservation Association in Fort Pierce developed a map showing nutrient concentrations flowing into the Indian River Lagoon around Vero Beach. The results weighed heavily in favor of golf's innocence.

As reported in TCPalm, part of the USA Today network, while researchers were hunting for “hot spots,” they found the areas around Vero Beach Country Club and The Moorings Yacht and Country Club were “cool.” “Yeah, we were pretty surprised, given that we assumed golf courses use a lot of fertilizer,” ORCA's founder and lead scientist, Edie Widder, was quoted as saying.

That speaks to all-too common misperceptions that fuel drive-by judgments that the game's visibility makes it vulnerable to. Such

as, irrigation running in the middle of the day must be a waste of water, even though the superintendent is locating a leak in order to save water. Or any application must be an over-use of fertilizer or similar, even though doing so would be detrimental to the plant and a waste of time, labor and money.

The TCPalm story told how both courses were among nearly a dozen in total along the Treasure Coast that are certified under the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The program helps to protect natural resources and enhance wildlife habitat. To be certified, the report said, “a course has to meet strict standards in wildlife and habitat management, pest control, water conservation and water quality.”

But as Ed Skvarch, St. Lucie County Extension Service director and commercial horticulture agent, told TCPalm, “most golf courses, even if they're not Audubon-certified, are good stewards of the environment.”

Craig Weyandt, in the blue shirt on the left, prepares to take a group out on the golf course on a recent wildlife tour.



The story also quoted Craig Weyandt, golf course superintendent from The Moorings and Tim Cann, CGCS director of greens and ground maintenance at Harbour Ridge Yacht and Country Club. What they had to say was textbook education for readers on why superintendents were sound environmental stewards.

For example, in one quote Weyandt said: “The role of a golf course superintendent is to maintain the turf and to keep it healthy, not to grow grass. Feed turfgrass too much nitrogen, for example, and it depletes the carbohydrate reserves in the plant. It would be like a doctor making a patient sick.”

The report added: “Over-fertilizing also forces a plant to grow, which to a golf course looking to stay both green and in the black, means more mowing, more work and wasting more fuel.”

Cann drew a distinction between trained and licensed applicators on a golf course and what happens on countless home lawns.

“Before we use any fertilizer we test our soil to see what it needs,” he said. “Most homeowners don’t do that. They run out to Home Depot or Lowes and buy fertilizer that their soil may not need. By testing our soil, it’s very uncommon for us to put any phosphorus out. We just don’t need it.”

Cann explained that the first line of defense against pests at Harbour Ridge is biological, saying that “good critters eat bad critters.” “When pesticides are used, they’re spot-treated using battery-operated tanks instead of broadcast sprayers. And they’re never used within 25 feet of lakes or wetlands,” the report said.

It went on to say: “The primary source for irrigation at Harbour Ridge is treated wastewater generated throughout the property. As a secondary source, Harbour Ridge has an agreement with the South Florida Water Management District to draw water out of the nearby C-23 Canal.

“It’s a mutually beneficial relationship: The canal drains farmland in western Martin and St. Lucie counties, so it’s laden with nutrients and pollutants that, if not diverted to Harbour Ridge, would end up in the St. Lucie River.

“Besides being used for irrigation, the canal water diverted to Harbour Ridge is sent to lakes and wetlands. Filtered by turf and nutrient-hungry aquatic plants, any water that leaves the property is cleaned before it enters the river.”

That’s a scenario that plays out on many courses in Florida, and indeed across the country. And while Weyandt is glad to see that fact reported in black and white, he is not about to declare victory. On the contrary, he believes superintendents need to maintain their



Craig Weyandt, on the right, explains how golf courses are home to far more than just golfers.

educational efforts. “It’s progress,” Weyandt says, of the report. “But we need to stay in the game. If we get out of the game, I think it will very quickly go back to the finger-pointing.”

For Weyandt, it’s clearly more than simply “staying in the game.” A Florida Master Naturalist, he works to shape the playing field itself and bring others to it. At The Moorings, he leads “four or five” wildlife walks each year for members and others. Being face-to-face, Weyandt says, “allows me to get on my soapbox.” At the same time that he’s pointing out wildlife, he might explain that the longer grasses at the water’s edge are not to swallow golf balls but to slow run-off, increase filtration and reduce sedimentation.

Weyandt also strives to make himself visible to other constituencies. When the Pelican Island Audubon Society – which is unrelated to Audubon International - hosted a sustainable landscapes conference in January, he was there. “It was a very, very worthwhile exercise,” he says. “It allows that one-on-one conversation with the naysayer, the skeptic. Then you can really start to address their concerns - or perceptions - with science-based information.”

Perhaps it was that science, along with the nutrient mapping exercise that led ORCA’s Widder to say at the end of the TCPalm story: “Good golf courses don’t poison their ponds. They keep them clean naturally.” Widder also had some advice for club members: “Let the people trained to maintain your golf course do their job the way they were trained. You’ll get a better golf course, and we’ll all get a better lagoon.” ■

-Trent Bouts.



Turn up at an event or two... Kyle Sweet, CGCS, center, and members celebrate at The Sanctuary Golf Club's 25th anniversary gala.

Embracing the Boom AND ALL IT ENTAILS

by Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

It's a Friday afternoon, staff has left for the day and it's been a "helluva" past few weeks. The women's member-guest wrapped up this week, the club is having all types of parties, which yours truly and many of my terrific staff do decorations and props for, and the course is in great shape despite the lack of rain. There is just so much activity around here. It's the season, of course, it's going to be busy, right?

Just in case you haven't noticed how busy it actually is in our business right now, pick up an industry magazine. With headlines like "The Boom is Back" it's not hard to tell from a few articles that things are good now. Just try to get a contractor out to laser level a few tees for you and maybe fix up some bunker drainage. Good luck, those guys are feeling the boom too!

It's not about new golf courses, it's a matter of updating today's golf courses and in many cases making them better, with a greater variety of tees, less difficulty and, dare I say it, maybe even some terrain that's a little easier to maintain?

I've been in the business long enough to see a few things and

get to know a few people. I'm seeing quite a surge in activity, but not necessarily in play at my place. Instead, I am seeing more members using our new fitness center and trying out the fastest growing sport in the country, Pickleball. I am also in the midst of helping to plan and install a couple of bocce courts just behind the clubhouse, so members can test their skills at rolling a ball with one hand and tightly grasping a glass of Chardonnay in the other. Interesting stuff, and I'm willing to bet many superintendents reading this you are seeing a similar "boom" beyond golf at your facility.

Today's retiree is a different person from that of 25 years ago. Without a doubt, golf may be part of the plan for him or her as they enter into the next phase of their life, but variety and engagement is what they are really after. Opportunities to have social experiences with buddies has evolved into mixed events on the courts or a visit to the gym before lunch for many active couples. As members get older and physical constraints creep in, and perhaps golf becomes too taxing for regular play, alternative activities keep members involved which is exactly what you both want.

Are the days of just good old-fashioned golf clubs over? I doubt it and would shudder to think it so, but I've got to say that increased amenities and increased value for your customers is steering the ship right now. Should a golf course superintendent care? I think the answer is yes and I think as the manager of the biggest asset that your club has, you should be paying close attention to everything that is orbiting around what used to be, and maybe still is, the driving force for your customers to be enjoying time at your facility.

It would be really easy to shrug off the fact that there are 100 people either playing or watching at the tennis mixer tonight or that more people visited the fitness center today than there were tee times or, lastly, that an amenity like bocce is a waste of time and not something you need to know about or even care about. I think it's important that you do care. You should be able to talk the talk all around the club. Your members and customers will appreciate it.

If you want someone to be interested in you, be interested in them. How better to do that than to be a team player and support the many activities that are going on all around you at your facility. Take a highlighter and mark down a few special events that you think would be good to visit and let your members know that you're not just the person out there watering and mowing the grass.

You're the person that manages their golf course and you've got an interest in their total club experience. Talk about the weather, the food in the clubhouse and, dare I say, maybe a candid discussion about the golf course. You may find that in a different setting it's easier and less contentious to talk about the course and what it is you do. Ultimately, whatever conversations come out of it will probably be positive because you are there, and you are interested and in return the people you are standing beside will be glad you are.

Ok, I know, I know...who's got the time? We all struggle with that. Start by really understanding your organization and learning about all of the activities that are out there. Newsletters, member emails, monthly staff meetings, industry magazines, there are many ways to know what's happening. Turn up at an event or two. Heck, don't stay for the whole thing or they'll think you don't have a life. But stay for a while, shake some hands and greet as many people as you can. Watch, talk, enjoy and slip away back to the shop when the time is right. You'll get the hang of it and your members will be glad to see you being part of the success and the future that is happening right now at your club.

The "boom" is back but it's broader than before. So, let's grow with the times. What we do depends on it. ■

- Kyle Sweet is certified golf course superintendent at The Sanctuary Golf Club on Sanibel Island



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IN THE NEWS

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

Steve Rodgers

Wildwood Golf and RV Resort

Tallahassee Democrat, February 20

Wildwood owners Susan and David McQuary announced that Wildwood has a new course superintendent. Steve Rodgers will begin duties this week and has a vast amount of experience in southern golf. Steve comes to Wildwood with a great resume as he is licensed and certified in chemicals and is a superb golf course mechanic.

Darren Davis, CGCS

Olde Florida Golf Club

Naples Daily News, February 27

Southwest Florida golf has a new representative. A familiar face, but now one with a true nationwide reach. Olde Florida Golf Club superintendent Darren Davis has been elected the president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Davis has been in the organization 28 years and is a past-president of the Everglades GCSA and of the Florida GCSA and Florida Turfgrass Association. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the Florida GCSA in 2004, and received the Turfgrass Association's Wreath of Grass - its highest award - in 2011.

"Becoming president is a privilege that I don't take lightly," Davis said in a release. "I hope I am able to give the association back even a fraction of what it's given to me."

In an article in Golf Course Management magazine profiling his election, Davis urged keeping current assistant superintendents in the industry and preparing and helping them become head superintendents. In addition to his presidency, Davis also is serv-

ing as chairman of the organization's Student Task Group. "This industry needs smart, talented students the same way it needs smart, talented assistants if we want to be ready for the future," Davis said in the article.

Director of golf Tom Wildenhaus, former NFL coach Mike Ditka, who was one of the founders of Olde Florida, and course architect Rees Jones also discuss Davis in the article. "It comes down to leadership," Ditka said. "A football coach has got to be a leader. He's got to be out front. He's got to be the guy in control. He's got to be the boss. And that's exactly what Darren is. He's the guy out front."

Tim Cann

Harbour Ridge Yacht and Country Club

Craig Weyandt

The Moorings at Hawk's Nest

TCPalm, March 1

Golfers at Harbour Ridge Yacht and Country Club have more incentive than most to "keep it in the fairways." Some of the holes at the course in St. Lucie County north of Palm City are bordered by wetlands, and folks at Harbour Ridge take protecting their wetlands very seriously.

"You stay out of the wetlands, even if your ball goes in there," said Tim Cann, director of greens and ground maintenance at the club. "You take a drop instead. And the worst thing a golfer wants is another stroke on his score card."

As one of eight Treasure Coast golf courses certified by Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program, Harbour Ridge cares about more than wetlands. Despite news in early February that construction of a golf club partially owned by basketball legend Michael Jordan near Hobe Sound was polluting the South Fork of the St. Lucie River, courses generally are good environ-

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mental stewards, said Edie Widder, lead scientist and founder of the Ocean Research and Conservation Association in Fort Pierce.

ORCA developed a map showing “hot spots” of nutrients flowing into the Indian River Lagoon around Vero Beach. The areas around two Audubon-certified courses - Vero Beach Country Club and The Moorings Yacht and Country Club - are surprisingly “cool.” “Yeah, we were pretty surprised, given that we assumed golf courses use a lot of fertilizer,” Widder said.

Turns out over-fertilizing isn’t just bad for the environment, it’s bad for golf courses, said Craig Weyandt, course superintendent at The Moorings. “The role of a golf course superintendent is to maintain the turf and to keep it healthy, not to grow grass,” he said. “Feed turfgrass too much nitrogen, for example, and it depletes the carbohydrate reserves in the plant. It would be like a doctor making a patient sick.”

Most golf courses, even if they’re not Audubon certified, are good stewards of the environment, said Ed Skvarch, St. Lucie County Extension Service director and commercial horticult-

ure agent, who teaches best management classes to golf course superintendents and other workers.

Jimmy Alston

Eagle Creek Golf and Country Club

Naples Daily News, March 20

Tiger Woods’ runner-up finish in the Valspar Championship a couple of weeks ago was at Innisbrook Resort’s Copperhead Course, designed by Lawrence Packard. Naples’ Eagle Creek also was designed by Packard. “We are the only golf course in southwest Florida to be originally designed by Larry Packard,” golf course superintendent Jimmy Alston said. “Larry Packard was considered the father of the double dogleg on par 5s. He incorporated this feature in many of his designs, including No. 14 at the Copperhead. Eagle Creek has two such par 5s, our Nos. 11 and 15.” ■



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Ewing Irrigation Hires Childers

Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply has appointed Tom Childers as the eastern division vice-president. Childers brings more than 26 years of experience in the landscape and green industry including business operations and development, sales and marketing.

Previously, Childers was co-founder and president of Landscape Today, a sales and marketing agency serving green industry manufacturers, for nearly four years. Before that he was senior vice-president of marketing at John Deere Landscapes for nearly 13 years. He also held leadership roles with Toro and Turf Care Products. Childers earned an M.B.A. in marketing from Kennesaw State University in Georgia and a B.S. in finance from Auburn University in Alabama.

In addition to Florida, Ewing's geographic footprint in the east includes locations in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Recertified Recently

Congratulations to Steven Huffstutler and Rusty Wilson on recently renewing their status as certified golf course superintendents. Huffstutler, from Glen Eagle Golf and Country Club in Naples, is a member of the Everglades GCSA and Florida GCSA.

Wilson, from Four Seasons Resorts and Hotels in Orlando, is a member of the Central Florida GCSA and Florida GCSA.

Congratulations also to Tony Brown, from Mallory Hill Golf Club, and Todd Ronske, with Howard Fertilizer and Chemical, who were recognized at the 2018 Golf Industry Show for being certified golf course superintendents for 25 years.

Solitude Unites with FL's Lake Masters

Solitude Lake Management, specializing in lake, pond and wetland management, fisheries management and related environmental services, has expanded its presence by uniting with Florida-based Lake Masters Aquatic Weed Control. Solitude welcomes 84 staff members from seven facilities across Florida, including locations in Fort Myers, Fort Lauderdale, Palm City, West Palm Beach, Orlando, Tampa and Melbourne.

"We couldn't be happier to welcome the Lake Masters team to the Solitude family," says Solitude chief executive officer Kevin Tucker. "They've always made it a priority to deliver high-quality solutions, and together we look forward to exceeding the ever-evolving needs of our Florida clients and the local environment."

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Berg and Brooks Travel to GIS

Florida GCSA members Renze Berg and Daniel Brooks attended this year's Golf Industry Show in San Antonio, TX thanks to a superintendent grant program from Bayer Environmental Science. They were part of an additional investment by Bayer this year, which doubled the number of grants to help superintendents grappling with significant damages following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria.

"By attending the Golf Industry Show, I gained new insight into products and new techniques," says Berg, from River Strand Golf and Country Club in Bradenton. "The few shows I've gone to in the past have really helped shape the professionalism at my course. Seeing how other superintendents conduct themselves and learning what's working for them at their respective courses is helpful."

Berg notes that the opportunities for continuing education at the Golf Industry Show were particularly valuable, helping superintendents not only to understand new ideas but also to develop relationships with those who have different approaches to turfgrass management. Brooks, from Shadow Wood Country Club in Naples, agreed. "It is always great to stay on top of all of the best new tools available to turfgrass managers," he says. "It is a great way to network as well. At events like the Golf Industry Show you have an opportunity to meet face-to-face with many people in



Renze Berg from River Strand Golf and Country Club, with Bayer's Zachary Lane and Daniel Brooks from Shadow Wood Country Club..

the golf industry all at once."

As part of his participation at the Golf Industry Show, Brooks also served as a speaker on a panel discussion on hurricane recovery. Moderated by Scott Hollister, editor of Golf Course Management magazine, Brooks and the other panelists discussed the extent of damage they experienced on their courses as well as specific efforts they had taken to restore playing surfaces back to pre-hurricane performance.

"Our goal with the Bayer superintendent grant program has always been to empower superintendents with the best in continuing education," Bayer golf segment manager David Wells says. "We recognized that this year with so many superintendents facing monumental challenges with hurricane recovery. We wanted to help by making sure they had access to key learning opportunities at the Golf Industry Show."

For more information about the program, reach Zachary Lane, Bayer area sales manager at zachery.lane@bayer.com.

With Sympathy

Members of the Florida GCSA extend sincere sympathies to the family and friends of Joseph "Teak" Black, 22, of Naples, who died unexpectedly on February 2. He was the son of longtime Florida GCSA and Everglades GCSA member Mark Black and wife, Susan. Mark spent more than 30 years as director of golf courses and grounds between Quail West Country Club and Bonita Bay Club and is now president of J. Mark Black Consulting.

Donations in Teak Black's name can be sent to the North Naples United Methodist Church, 6000 Goodlette-Frank Road, Naples, FL 34109 or to Youth 4 Orphans, 2258 Campestre Terrace, Naples, FL 34119.

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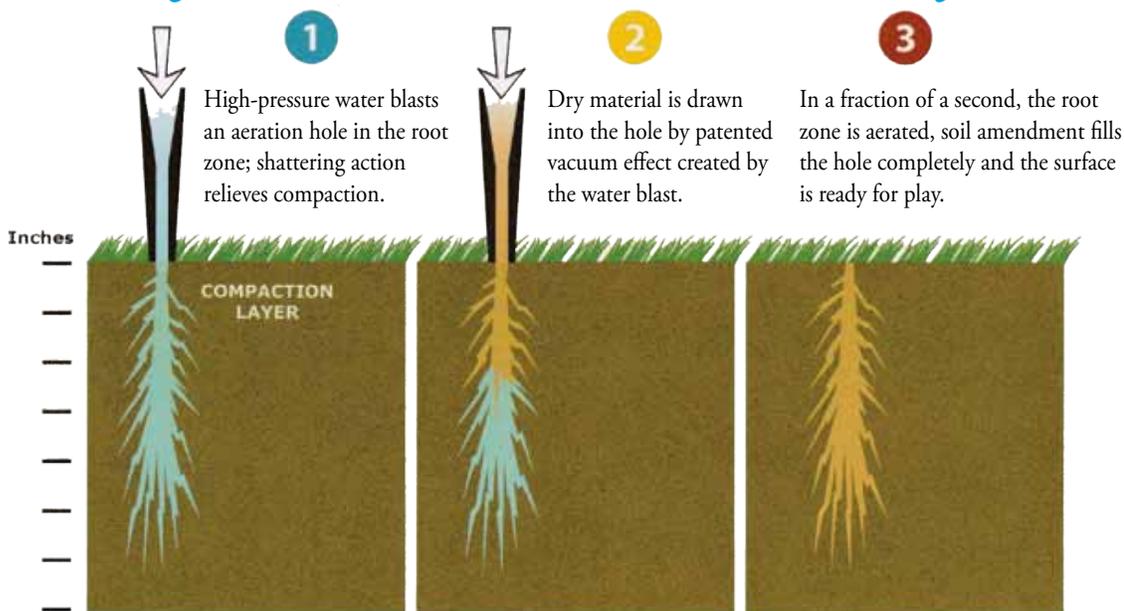
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Todd Evans Named Manager of the Year



Todd Evans

Todd Evans, director of grounds operations at J.W. Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort, has been honored as golf grounds manager of the year by Marriott Golf, the global golf division of Marriott International with nearly 80 golf resorts worldwide. The resort also won Marriott's golf property of the year award.

Evans has spent the last 10 years with the resort achieving record scores in associate satisfaction, an accident free workplace, charitable fundraising and course conditioning measures. A press release from the company says Evans "continually produces consistent championship tier playing conditions for his guests and members." Evans also was instrumental in guiding the property through the preparation and significant recovery for Hurricane Irma, which made landfall directly on Marco Island.

The release also said: "He excelled through the criteria for this award, including items such as overall turfgrass condition, successful large-scale renovation or construction projects, member and guest satisfaction scores, employee satisfaction scores, staff development and more."

The resort offers guests two private golf courses - the recently renovated Rookery and Hammock Bay - that have earned Marriott's environmental sustainability performance award.

The Rookery, recently redesigned by Peter Jacobsen and Jim Hardy, now features wall-to-wall Platinum paspalum turfgrass; newly-designed bunker complexes and an upgraded clubhouse with an "Old Florida" interior theme. Appropriately named The Rookery, the golf course is nestled in shallow wetlands that attract many bird species.

Gardner Enjoys Golf As Toro VIP Winner



Sam Gardner

Sam Gardner, first assistant superintendent from Isleworth Country Club in Windermere, was one of 20 assistants who took part in GCSAA's National Golf Championship in San Antonio, TX in February thanks to support from The Toro Company. Gardner was nominated for the VIP Stay and Play award by his superintendent Sean Duffy. Toro provided entry into golf tournament events, accommodations at the J.W. Marriott San Antonio Hill Country hotel for three nights and meals.

"It was an absolutely great experience," Gardner says. "The opportunity to get to know so many people I otherwise would not have had the chance to meet was wonderful. Everything Toro put on from dinners to the golf tournament was all top notch. The golf courses were really good too."

Gardner, in his fifth year at Isleworth, has attended the Golf Industry Show before when it has been in Orlando, and once in New Orleans while he was still in college at Western Kentucky University. His golf game was a "little rusty," he says, heading to San Antonio having not played in several months. But he and partner Joel Juarez from Dryden Park Golf Course in California still managed to finish third in Flight III of the net division of the four-ball tournament.

He was surprised to receive a trophy and gift certificate soon after returning home to Florida. It was some consolation for his phone effectively being stolen while he was there. A woman he spoke with when he called his number refused to return it after she found it on a roadside.

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Dolimpio's Dog is A Calendar Star



Colt, as he appears in two calendars this year.

Colt, the Chatahoula mix who serves as “director of animal control” at Lake Nona Golf and Country Club in Orlando, is about to enjoy more than his 15 minutes of fame. Instead, Colt’s time in the spotlight will span two months – featuring in June, in TurfNet’s Superintendent’s Best Friend calendar, and July, in Lebanon Turf’s Dog Days of Turf calendar.

He almost didn’t make it to his first birthday. Owner, Nick Dolimpio, assistant to Brandon Richey at Lake Nona, was out watering greens when he returned to his cart. Colt wasn’t to be seen but Dolimpio often used the sound of the emergency brakes to bring him back. Unfortunately, the next sound he heard was entirely unexpected.

“I ran him over,” Dolimpio says. “I thought I’d killed him.”



Nick Dolimpio and Colt at Lake Nona Golf and Country Club.

Dolimpio called his wife, Bailey Young, who by chance is a veterinary technician at a practice about 30 minutes away. Colt survived with nothing worse than a broken leg. Despite the mishap, Colt has become a valuable member of the team, keeping sandhill cranes from tearing up turf looking for insects like mole crickets.

Dolimpio has been at Lake Nona for three years after spending a year as assistant superintendent in training at Card Sound Golf Club in Key Largo. He grew up in Pennsylvania and has a turf degree from Delaware Valley College.

Florida GCSA on Show at Golf Day



Steve McMillen, North Florida PGA Section, chats with GCSAA field representative Ralph Dain at Florida Golf Day.



Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan with Jason Frank and Will Harrell, both of Harrell's Fertilizer.

Golf course superintendents were once again well-represented at Florida Golf Day in Tallahassee. Florida GCSA president John Curran from Johns Island Club, board member Andy Jorgensen, CGCS from On Top of the World and Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan led the way with support from GCSAA field representative Ralph Dain. Representatives from Harrell’s also mingled with legislators and staff members, telling golf’s story.

The Florida GCSA is part of the Golf Florida Alliance, a collaboration of leading organizations representing all segments of the state’s golf industry. Alliance members stressed golf’s economic and tourism impact, environmental stewardship, charity and the health benefits.

The game’s direct economic impact in Florida was \$8.2 billion in 2013, an increase from \$7.5 billion in 2007 according to a report by GOLF 20/20. Florida’s golf industry supports more than 132,000 jobs and \$3.6 billion in annual wage income along with being home to more than 1,000 golf facilities, the most of any state.



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The Old Collier Hosts Regulators



Brian Beckner of Native Bird Boxes helps with the regulatory tour of The Old Collier Golf Club.

Golf's positive relationship with the environment was highlighted for governmental regulators during a visit to The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples in March. Old Collier's director of agronomy Todd Draffen hosted a three-hour visit during the annual Florida Spring Regulatory Tour. The visit focused on golf course pest and water management.

Draffen and Old Collier superintendent Riciardo Uriarte were also supported by Brian Beckner of Native Bird Boxes and superintendents Kyle Sweet, CGCS a master naturalist from The Sanctuary Golf Club and David Dore-Smith from Copperleaf Golf Club. GCSAA field representative Ralph Dain, USGA Green Section southeast region agronomist Todd Lowe and Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan were also on hand to interact and answer questions from representatives of the Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Environmental Protection Agency and South Florida Water Management District.



Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan tries out a superintendent's "desk."

Applications Now Open For Business Institute

Golf course superintendents seeking to enhance their business knowledge can now apply for the 2018 Syngenta Business Institute. This year marks the 10th anniversary of providing superintendents with the opportunity to learn and network in an academic setting.

This year's program runs December 3-6 in Winston-Salem, NC.

Applications close August 14, with places for about 25 superintendents.

Through a partnership with Wake Forest School of Business, selected participants will spend three days learning from business school professors about key topics such as financial management, generational and cultural differences, leadership skills, effective communication and negotiation tactics.

To be considered, candidates must complete an online application, which includes relevant work experience and educational background, as well as a short essay on why they should be selected. For more information and application details visit www.GreenCastOnline.com/SBI or contact your local Syngenta territory manager. Successful applicants will be notified in October.

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First Green Building Better Understanding

Soon, the First Green will fall under the GCSAA umbrella and an exciting future lies ahead for this program where superintendents use the golf courses as an environmental learning lab for school students. I know that I have written about it on a couple of occasions and, through conversations and other outreach efforts, have promoted it on many more.

During the 2017 Golf Industry Show in Orlando, we conducted a First Green field trip at Orange Tree Golf Club hosted by superintendent Rob Torri. The field trip served as immersion opportunity for superintendents, educating them on how to make use of the new program and how to engage the students.

We continued the field trips earlier this year during GIS in San Antonio, TX and Scott MacPhee, Florida GCSA and GCSAA member and superintendent at Sailfish Point in Stuart, was there. I am excited to report that MacPhee was so moved by his experience in San Antonio that he has scheduled a field trip at his facility to coincide with National Golf Day on April 25. He will call upon fellow superintendents from the Treasure Coast GCSA to assist in the event as he hosts students from The Pine School in nearby Hobe Sound.

MacPhee is also hoping to have World Golf Hall of Famer, Nick Price, help run a station for the students. The students will be exposed to STEM education and see how lessons they have been taught in the classroom come to life on the golf course. STEM is the acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

For example, students will have the opportunity to calculate green speeds using a Stimpmeter. I know this is just what every superintendent wants... 10- to 12-year-olds trying to grasp the concept of green speed just so they can complain about it in the future! They will see how math is used to compute green speeds and perhaps even how to determine the square footage of a putting surface.

By exposing the students to the multiple facets of golf course main-



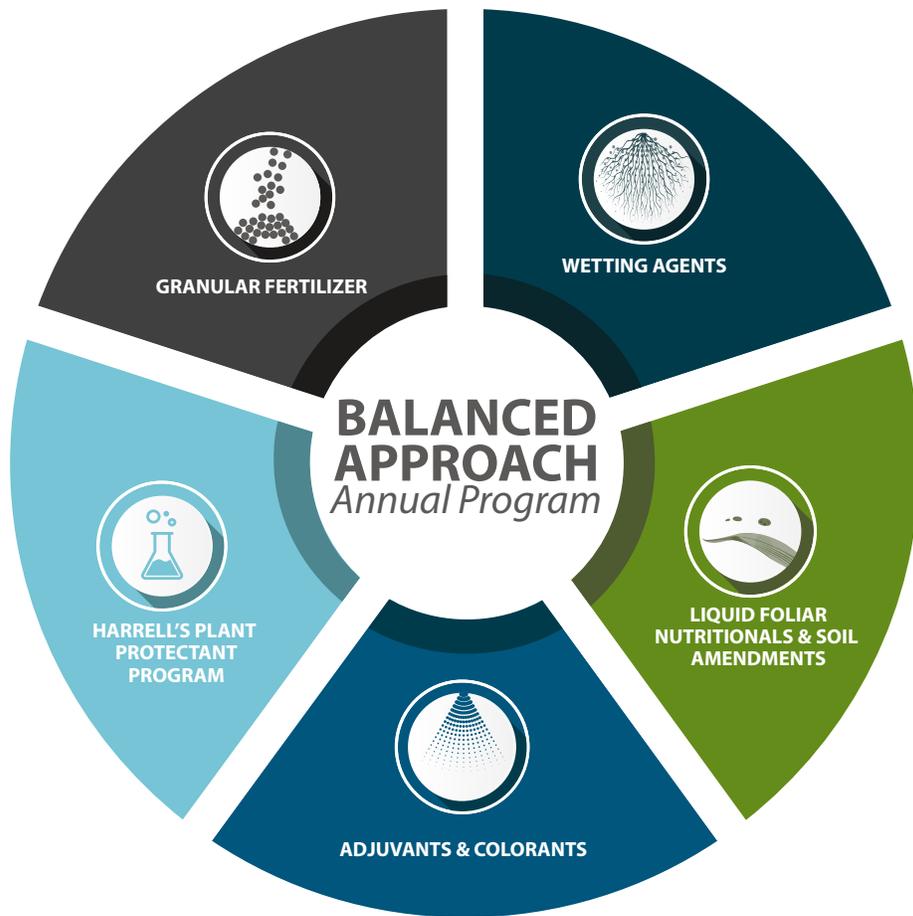
A hand goes up with another question at the kind of First Green event Scott MacPhee is about to host at Sailfish Point Golf Club. In this instance, Steve Kealy is the superintendent hosting kids at Glendale Country Club Bellevue, WA. (Photo: David Phipps GCSAA regional representative, NW.)

tenance as well as the environmental benefits of a golf course, we can go a long way to promote the profession in a more positive light. For MacPhee and Sailfish Point to host this field trip in conjunction with National Golf Day, could be a great template for future local activities to help echo the message being delivered in Washington, D.C.

Golf has such a positive story to tell and I am truly excited that MacPhee and his club will be delivering that message to numerous students. Hopefully, the students will take the message home with them to their parents, who might be watching news coverage of National Golf Day, helping create a far more accurate portrayal of what we do on a daily basis

It is my desire that more superintendents will see the benefit of conducting a First Green field trip at their facility and we can promote the positives of our profession statewide. If you are intrigued by the possibility of promoting what you do, please reach out to me and let's plan a First Green field trip at your facility and continue to move the needle in a positive fashion. ■

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



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