

FALL 2021

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The FLORIDA Green



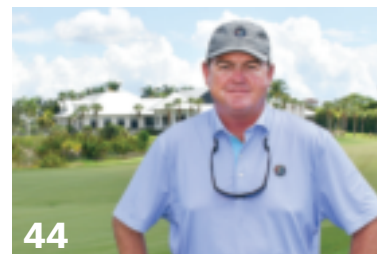
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ON THE COVER:

Eric Ruha has helped bring Shadow Wood Country Club into a bright, new era with renovations of all three courses in the space of four years.



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New Initiatives Promise Value to Your Facility

It seems as though the COVID-19 era is never going to end, and yet here we are. As we roll into another busy golfing season, I am hoping that the COVID “bump” the golf industry has seen continues. For the most part, it seems the virus is having a very positive effect on clubs around the state. I have seen and heard of many renovations and improvements occurring this past summer, and I hope every one of you has benefitted from it.

As I take the reins for the next 12 months, I want you to know I will do all I can to keep up the positive momentum that the Florida GCSA board has experienced in recent years. Heading into my term, the association is discussing several new initiatives to better serve the members.

First, is the creation of the equipment manager membership, which is intended to engage those that are often the backbone of our operation. This membership will hopefully provide education and networking avenues for these individuals and help them grow in their roles. It also allows the turfgrass manager to show respect for the value these professionals bring by investing in their future.

Second, we want to put more emphasis on assistant superintendents by providing more opportunities for them to be engaged in the local and state associations. With several goals in mind, we have created a new assistant superintendent committee chaired by Tyler Robb, assistant superintendent at The Loxahatchee Club. Perhaps the most important element is creating an assistants-only business seminar and golf outing. Education at this event will be geared towards preparing the next generation for the next step in their career.

We hope both of these initiatives will bring greater value back to your facility.

A new season also brings new challenges. For the past few years, the Florida GCSA has enjoyed a successful relationship with the Florida Turfgrass Association (FTGA) engaging The Southern Group to represent the turfgrass industry on legislative issues on a state level. This partnership has been instrumental in having the Golf BMP's recognized in Senate Bill 712, keeping golf open during the COVID shutdown, and providing a voice on our behalf on important issues current and forthcoming.

Unfortunately, the FTGA had to withdraw its financial contribution for the upcoming year. The Florida GCSA board feels it is extremely important to continue partnering with The Southern Group to keep the doors open, so to speak, in Tallahassee. That being said, the FTGA's withdrawal left a huge monetary void. We are respectfully asking for local chapters to commit funding to ensure that our government relations efforts continue. We are very thankful for the FTGA's support and look forward to working with them again in the future.

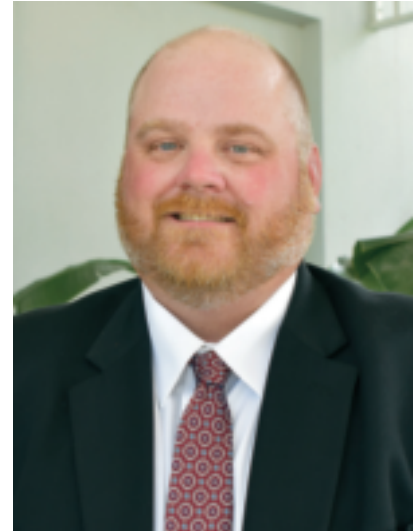
If you didn't already know, Dr. Bryan Unruh at the University of Florida has done an excellent job revising the Golf BMP manual and taking over the testing and certification portion of the program. The new electronic version of the manual will be available soon, but the testing and certification is already available.

The new test is fully online and can be performed on your own schedule. If we can get 100 percent of our members certified, we will be in a far better position to face opposition that threatens the way we operate. It is also another way to invest in your employees by providing key continuing education for them to grow in their own roles.

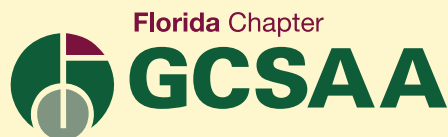
If you never received the Golf BMP certification, or need to renew, now would be a great time to do it. More information on this new certification can be found on at www.floridagcsa.com under the News and Information tab.

In closing, I look forward to the next year serving our members and this great profession. I have always said this industry is like no other and it is all of you who make it that way. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to reach out. My door is always open. ■

- Andy Jorgensen, CGCS, *On Top of the World*



Andy Jorgensen, CGCS



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Thanks for a Lot More Than Just the Grass

On September 14, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), in conjunction with other global superintendent groups, celebrated those who help keep the game going and enjoyable. "Thank a Golf Course Superintendent Day" encouraged all those who love golf to give a pat on the back to the golf course superintendent at their course.

Well, now it's my turn. My position as executive director of the Florida GCSA allows me a front row seat on what your job entails. You are the manager of the game's most valuable resource: the golf course. Your job encompasses turfgrass management, environmental stewardship, research, personnel management, budget development, accounting, event management, inventory control, communications and, of course, a whole heck of a lot more.

I realize I'm preaching to the choir, but I want you to know how much you are appreciated and thank each of you as personally as I can with my pen in this issue of The Florida Green.

I hope you saw the many social media posts from other industry entities and individuals, making their appreciation known. Some of them came from the PGA Tour and LPGA Tour, whose players benefit from, and rightfully rave about, the conditions superintendents present every week.

Your profession has come a long way in recent years in terms of how it is regarded within the industry and by the golfing public. GCSAA and the Florida GCSA have been at the forefront of efforts to bring about that change. Of course, there is still a long way to go. Honestly, short of a reality television show recording what goes on in any given day, I don't know that anyone other than a superintendent will ever truly grasp just what the job entails.

But that doesn't mean we should give up and the annual Thank

a Golf Course Superintendent Day is one way to maintain that momentum. Within the profession, there is another group worthy of recognition.

In addition to managing your golf courses, many superintendents are active in the Florida GCSA, whether on the board of directors, on committees, or in task groups that keep the association engine running. Beyond official board business, your committees and task groups have a special charge to think outside the box and bring innovative ideas and suggestions to the board.

Indeed, many times a proposal from one of these bodies can change the course of the association. And this is good for all of us. Innovation, change and new ideas bring life and breath to the association, its members and volunteers.

If you have ever considered volunteering your time to serve on your local chapter board, I encourage you to do so. Board service is very rewarding and provides a unique experience and opportunity to stamp your own imprint on the golf industry. Board members are the soul of their association and keep it moving in the right direction.

You chapter meetings, golf tournaments, advocacy efforts and even fishing tournaments don't just happen by themselves. They are only possible through the efforts of your peers, giving of their time and effort on your behalf. So, just as hopefully golfers thanked you in September, please find a moment to thank those who serve your association and your profession. Let them know they are appreciated.

In closing, I want to thank you all once again for all you do, day in and day out, to keep golf number one in Florida. ■

- Jennifer Bryan, Executive Director

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CHAPTER ROUND UP

SUNCOAST



Nick Kearns from Venice Golf and Country Club addresses the room at the Suncoast GCSA annual Summer Slam.



Suncoast GCSA members enjoy the left field party deck at Tropicana Field while the Tampa Bay Rays beat the Baltimore Orioles.



Standing, Sean Shoffit, Everglades Equipment Group, and Robbie Boyd, TPC Prestancia; with, sitting, Charles Johnson, Laurel Oak Country Club; Dan Haubein, Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club; Steve Patterson, TPC Prestancia; Scott Austin, Longboat Key Club; and Preston Stephenson, Twin Isles Country Club.

The Suncoast GCSA had a relatively quiet summer. It becomes a challenge during the summer months to get members together to enjoy some time away from the dog days. We started our summer events off with the annual Summer Slam in conjunction with our annual meeting.

Sarasota National Golf Club hosted this year's superintendent vs. vendor event where the superintendents were crowned champions once again. During the annual meeting, the Suncoast chapter voted to bring back some familiar faces, with Dan Haubein from Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club taking the role of president, Preston Stephenson of Twin Isles Country Club returning as secretary-treasurer, and Joel Ehrhart from Sarasota National Golf Club moving into the vice-president seat.

The challenge of the summer always seems to be finding a time when the weather will cooperate with us long enough to have a successful outing, so this year the Suncoast chapter had our annual Rays baseball trip. A charter bus was included in this event to get members to and from the game and the left field party deck was reserved where superintendent and vendors were able to walk around, order food and drinks at their leisure while enjoying a great game. It helped that the Rays beat the Orioles in the bottom of the 9th with a two out two-run single by Austin Meadows.

As another summer comes to a close and we move into season, the Suncoast GCSA has a few upcoming events which, at press time, included the pro, super, supplier at TPC Prestancia, a First Green field trip at Sarasota National Golf Club, the infamous one-club and night golf at Hawks Run Golf Club, and the annual Christmas Party at the Gasparilla Inn and Club on December 18.

Be on the lookout for an event packed 2022.

- Joel Erhart, Sarasota National Golf Club

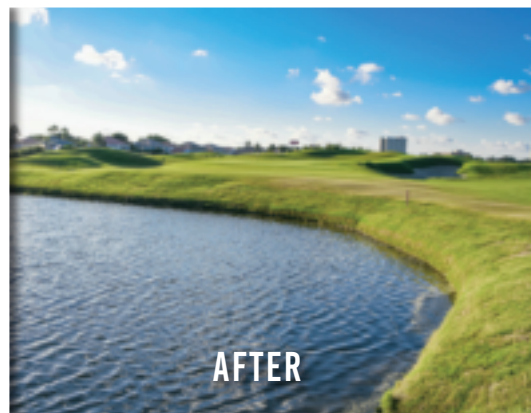


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SOUTH FLORIDA

The South Florida GCSA has given a gift of \$3,000 to the University of Florida for ongoing research performed by turf scientist Marco Schiavon, Ph.D.

Our chapter will also make a monetary donation to aid in government relations efforts to benefit golf in all of Florida, through the Florida GCSA's renewed contract with The Southern Group. We believe it is of great importance to show our continued support for this very important work.

At press time we were getting ready for our prestigious 36th annual South Florida Charity Golf Tournament, this year benefiting Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. We were excited for a full field at Jacaranda Golf Club with everyone

having lots of fun for a great cause.

– Chris Monserrate, Grand Palms Resort

SEVEN RIVERS

After battling a very wet summer, the skies cleared and allowed the group to head over to Rainbow's End Golf Club in Dunnellon in September. Rainbow's End is a unique nine-hole course that provides some great challenge and fun since you get to play each hole twice.

Host superintendent Joel Fort has worked tremendously hard improving conditions over the past few years, and this year was probably the best ever. Proprietors Don and Linda Delaney are always grateful for the chapter's support each year, and Ms. Linda's home cooked meals always ensure we have

a great turnout for this event.

Kevin Sunderman, CGCS at Isla Del Sol and current secretary-treasurer for GCSAA provided a wonderful presentation covering a GCSAA update, the value of your membership and building your team using the resources available to you. It goes without saying that we could not have had such a great event without Joel's dedication, Don's hospitality, Ms. Linda's cooking and Kevin's great presentation. A big thank you to you all.

Upcoming is one of the best events each year as we return to Juliette Falls Golf Club on November 4 for the annual Toys for Tots event. This event has really turned into something special and fills up very quickly, so get your group together before emailing me so we can ensure we fill all spots to those wishing to play.

Proceeds and collected items from this event are distributed locally to families in need. We are fortunate to have Pastor Ben Adams from NewLife Family Church and several of his church members graciously take on the duty of organizing the distribution of these items. It really goes without saying that, over the years, the chapter has made a dramatic impact on hundreds of children throughout Marion County and the surrounding area.

We are still looking for some locations to host meetings in December and January. Hosting is always a great way to show off your staff's hard work and dedication. If you would like to host, please reach out to me for information.

– Andy Jorgensen, On Top of the World



Marco Schiavon, Ph.D. with South Florida GCSA vice-president, Chris Monserrate.



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FLORIDA WEST COAST



Past-presidents Eric Dixon and Andy Neiswender catch up at the September meet and greet.

Great food, great drinks and a great time was had by all present at Thomas P's Sports Restaurant in Tampa, late September. This successful meet and greet event will be followed by many to come. Thanks are due to the West Coast GCSA board of directors for producing and sponsoring.

At press time, we were looking forward to our annual Benevolent and Research Tournament at Innisbrook Resort and

Spa mid-October. Education with CEU's was on offer, followed by a lunch and a four-person scramble on the famous Copperhead Course.

Next is the Florida West Coast GCSA's first equipment managers meeting at Avila Country Club on November 11. Superintendent Andrew Collier and Doug Johnson will host with lunch provided by Avila Country Club.

- Todd M. Six, On Top of the World



Florida West Coast GCSA members socialize at Thomas P's Sports Restaurant.

EVERGLADES

This year's Everglades GCSA annual meeting was at Quail West Golf and Country Club. The association would like to thank all members who took time out of their busy schedules to attend this event. Following the meeting, the participants headed out to the course in hopes of beating the summer rain.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other plans. The golf course was in immaculate shape, thanks to Nate Gingrich and his staff. In spite of the inclement weather, the food and beverage staff led by Damian Collins stepped up and was able to have food and drinks ready hours ahead of schedule.

The Everglades GCSA would also like to thank Tony D'Errico, chief operating officer, for hosting the event and Casey Brozek, director of golf, for organizing the golf and accommodating the completion of the chapter championship later that week.

Stakes were high with the trophy and bragging rights on the line at the joint meeting between the Everglades and Calusa chapters at Cedar Hammock Golf and Country Club. The Calusa chapter showed up to play and ultimately reclaimed the trophy from the Everglades with a score of 16.5 to 12.5.

Superintendent Todd Legan and his assistant Steve Jarrett had the golf course in great shape. Golf Professional Clayton Rogers and his staff ensured that the event ran smoothly. The Everglades GCSA would also like to thank general manager Jim Kurtzeborn and head professional, Clayton Rodgers, for hosting the event at Cedar Hammock.

At press time we were getting ready for our 2021 superintendent-pro and vendor-pro golf tournament hosted by Todd Evans and Anthony Schmid at Hammock Bay Golf and Country Club. With the Southwest Florida golf season rapidly approaching this event is always an excellent opportunity to get out and enjoy a round of golf with our golf professionals.

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The new Everglades GCSA board of directors.

The relationship between golf course superintendents, golf professionals and directors of golf is essential to success at everyone's club. This event is an excellent opportunity to spend some time together enjoying the game that brought each of us into the profession. Late October we

were headed to Old Corkscrew Golf Club for our annual Crew Golf Tournament. Our vendor appreciation event is at Pop Stroke of Fort Myers on November 12. Our Christmas golf and reception is at The Strand Golf and Country Club on December 17.



Incoming Everglades GCSA president Kevin Leo presents a plaque of appreciation for the work of outgoing president, Cisco Navas.

Don't forget to renew your membership or join the Everglades GCSA as soon as you can. It will be an event-filled year that you do not want to miss. Starting in November, our chapter events will be for members only.

In closing, the Everglades GCSA reminds everyone of the importance of BMP Certification. With state and local regulations looming, it is critical that we, as superintendents, do our part to show our efforts towards environmental sustainability. The certification is now available online through the UF extension website.

– Jesse Metcalf, The Forest Country Club

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PALM BEACH

It is hard to believe that fall is upon us, but we are excited about another great season. We wish all of our members and the members across the state a great season and much success.

In the months following our last update, we hosted our annual meeting at Old Marsh Golf Club. A special thank you to Spencer Cox and the entire staff for rolling out the red carpet for us. The education was provided by Jennifer Bryan, from the Florida GCSA, and Ralph Dain, from GCSAA, who gave updates on current and upcoming initiatives at both the state and national levels respectively.

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EDUCATION

The Florida GCSA works with local chapters to present a range of high quality, affordable educational opportunities across the state throughout the year.

THE FLORIDA GREEN

The Florida GCSA produces a high-quality, quarterly magazine that informs and showcases the success, professionalism and personality of its members.

E-NEWSLETTER AND EMAIL ALERTS

Drawing on our extensive database, your association delivers a quarterly electronic newsletter as well as regular email updates and alerts on news, events and notices.

MEMBER DIRECTORY

Your association produces an annual directory of names and contact details for every member putting you within fingertip reach of colleagues across the state.

ANNUAL MEETING AND GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

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GCSAA CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW RECEPTION

Your association offers this night of networking and camaraderie each year during GCSAA's annual GCSAA Conference and Trade show bringing the Florida GCSA family together away from home.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Florida GCSA awards recognize excellence and service within the golf course superintendent profession in the state, news of which is shared through press releases.

BENEVOLENT FUND

The association assists members and their families in times of difficulty with financial assistance up to \$2,500 per claim due to medical, natural disaster or family hardship.

FULL-TIME SUPPORT

The Florida GCSA employs a full-time executive director whose fundamental mission is simply to help you in the best way possible.

WEBSITE

The Florida GCSA maintains a strong online presence through www.floridagcsa.com where you can find news, register for meetings and manage your membership details.

CHAPTER ROUND UP



Pierce Wright drives on the testing 17th hole at Old Marsh Golf Club.



Matt Wise, Lost Tree Club; Carl Mistretta, First Tee Palm Beaches; Keith Viola, Eastpointe Country Club; and Frank McKee, Everglades Equipment Group; on the tee at Turtle Creek Club.



Carl Mistretta, of First Tee Palm Beaches, accepts a check for \$10,000 from the Palm Beach GCSA present by Ryan Swilley, Gulf Stream Golf Club; and Jason Bagwell, Gleneagles Country Club.

The rain, unfortunately, got the best of us and we were not able to play for the trophies. We held our annual elections which resulted in the following slate of officers and directors:

President, Ryan L. Swilley; vice-president, George P. Kervern; secretary, Jason Bagwell; treasurer, Brian P. Birney; external vice-president, Ryan L. Swilley. Directors - Nate R. Watkin,

Jeffrey A. Klontz Jr., Joshua A. Fleisher, Case LeVally, John E. Spiwak.

Our next event was at North Palm Beach Country Club where we had a fun day of golf and fellowship. Special thank you to Cory Adams, Jose Lopez and their team for hosting us. Due to the rainout at our annual meeting, the Palm Beach Chapter Championship was contested on this day. We also played a two-man best-ball tournament to add to the excitement.

Our most recent event was our joint meeting with the Treasure Coast GCSA at Turtle Creek Club in Tequesta. Thank you to Clarence Covington and the wonderful team at Turtle Creek for providing a first-class event and fun atmosphere.

Our chapters went head-to-head with 11 matches in total to battle for the Cavanaugh and Wagner Trophy. The 11 matches ended with five wins for each chapter and one tie. As a result, the Palm Beach GCSA retained the trophy for another year. Thank you to all who attended and for a great turnout with more than 60 people playing.

In summary, please be on the lookout for our announcement for our two-day third annual Fall Symposium, which will be provided virtually once again this year. As always, a special thank you to our members for participating in our events and to all of our sponsors.

-Ryan L. Swilley, Gulf Stream Golf Club

William "Bill" H. Horner

The Florida GCSA extends deepest sympathies to the family and friends of William H. "Bill" Horner, Jr. of Clermont, who died August 13 surrounded by his family. Horner, 60, was the owner of Golf Specialties, which he started over 25 years ago, and which was a longtime supporter of golf course superintendents through service and sponsorships.

Horner was born on November 16, 1960, in Dunlap, TN. He and LaDonna, his wife of 39 years, had two daughters and three grandsons. His obituary said, "Bill always brightened a room, a big teddy bear with tenderness in his eyes and a joy that was infectious. His sense of humor was like no other and was always a ray of sunshine. He never missed an opportunity to joke around and make others laugh."

He was preceded in death by his parents Reverend William H. Horner, Sr., and Mary Robert Horner. He is survived by his loving wife LaDonna, daughters Natalie Gardener (Sam), Whitney Horner, three grandchildren Gavin, Deacon and Tate, three sisters Cindy, Jackie, and Jewel, nieces and nephews Chad, Tonya, Shane, Corey and Alyssa.

James "Jim" Robert Mantey

The Florida GCSA extends deepest sympathies to the family and friends of James "Jim" Robert Mantey, who died, after a battle with cancer, at his home in Boca Raton on September 8. Mantey, 80, was president and chief operating officer of Hector Turf since buying the company and Toro distributorship in Miami in 1982.

Born June 6, 1941, in Fort Morgan outside Denver, CO, Mantey spent his formative years in Sharon Springs, KS, a rural farming community. He was the third of six children to mother, Alma Jean Quackenbush, and father, Paul John Mantey. Raised in a family that honored hard work, by age six, Mantey could be found at sunrise most days delivering the local paper on his bike.

After graduating from Sharon Springs High School in 1959, he attended the University of Notre Dame. Upon his graduation with a degree in electrical engineering in 1963, he took a job with Westinghouse in Washington, DC, and eventually went on to pursue an MBA

in finance from Wharton.

He moved to South Florida with his family in the early '70s, working first as a financial analyst with Eastern Airlines before taking a job with Arvida Corporation. He completed several development projects in the then largely undeveloped city of Boca Raton, including the Boca Raton Resort and Club. In time he became general manager and oversaw development of Boca West. He completed several projects with Arvida around south Florida before briefly moving to Maryland to buy a Toro distributorship.

In 1982, when Hector Turf became available, Mantey purchased the 75-year-old business and move his family back to Florida. His wife, Sandra, worked alongside him at Hector Turf.

A member of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church since the '70s, he cherished his alma mater and was a longtime member of the Notre Dame Club of Boca Raton. He was also actively involved in giving to and fund raising for Notre Dame, particularly the Boler-Paragheian Center for Rare and Neglected Diseases to advance research efforts for kabuki syndrome.

An avid life sciences investor and philanthropist, he was passionate about advancing drug and treatment discovery to transform lives. In 2014, the Mantey family established the James and Sandra Mantey Family Foundation which supports numerous charitable causes and will continue to do so.

Mantey was known for his quick wit and sense of humor. His mother once joked, "God gave us Jim so we wouldn't be bored." He adored spending time with his family and friends, golfing, fishing and goofing around with his grandchildren.

The advertisement for JWTurf Farms features a central logo with the text "JWTURF FARMS" and icons of a golf ball, a golf club, and a house. Below the logo are three rectangular photos: the first shows two people on a golf course, the second shows a golf club on a green, and the third shows a golf course with a palm tree. Below the photos, the text reads "FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1987", followed by the phone number "(561) 798-6655" and the website "jwturffarms.com". At the bottom, there is a row of logos for various golf courses and products, including "CELEBRATION", "SUNDAY", "LATITUDE", "TIF GRAND", "TIF ZEPHYRUS", "GEOZYSSA", "CitraBlue", "EMPIRE", and "PIMM".



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Helping your Success Take Root

State Board Creates ADVISORY POSITIONS

The Florida GCSA welcomes two new advisory members to the association board room. Aaron Martin, of Helena Agri-Enterprises, and Jim Staub, of Wesco Turf, will serve as non-voting directors for the next two years. The newly created positions are reserved for industry partners and will be appointed by the board.

Martin, a branch manager, and Staub, vice-president of golf, will serve under a new leadership team elected at the association's annual meeting at The Resort at Longboat Key in July. Andy Jorgensen, CGCS director of golf course maintenance operations at 54-hole On Top of the World in Ocala, is new president, taking over from Andy Neiswender, from Bellair Country Club in Bellair.

Bryce Koch, CGCS, from Cypress Lake Country Club in Fort Myers, is the new vice-president and Parker Ferren, CGCS, from Copperleaf Golf Club in Estero, is secretary-treasurer.

"We're thrilled to welcome Aaron and Jim to the work of running the Florida GCSA," Jorgensen says. "Our industry partners have always played a critical role in what we are able to do as an association and these appointments recognize the stake they have. It is a mark of respect for all our industry partners and reflects the fact that the success of superintendents and vendors is mutually dependent."

While the new positions do not come with voting powers, Jorgensen expects they will bring valuable context to many board decisions. "Many of our industry partners are on the road more than most of us. They get to see and hear things that maybe the rest of us don't," he says. "I'm confident these positions will bring a new and valuable perspective to many of our discussions as a board. Aaron and Jim are very good at what they do and widely respected in superintendent circles. We expect to be a stronger board with their input."

Jorgensen's election places him in a small group of superintendents who have led both the Florida GCSA and the Florida Turfgrass Association, where was president in 2017-18. Others to have done so in the 2000s include Bill Kistler, Matt Taylor, CGCS, Greg Pheneger and Darren Davis, CGCS. Jorgensen was honored with the turfgrass association's highest award, the Wreath of Grass, last year.

Jorgensen is one of the most engaged members of his profession in the state. He has served as longtime president of the Seven Rivers GCSA, serves as a GCSAA Grassroots Ambassador, is a board member of the Jeff Hayden Memorial Envirotron Golf Classic, won Environmental Leader in Golf awards from GC-



The Florida GCSA's new executive committee members, from left, immediate past-president Andy Neiswender, secretary-treasurer Parker Ferren, CGCS, vice-president Bryce Koch, CGCS, and president Andy Jorgensen, CGCS.

SAA and Golf Digest in 2014 and 2017.

More broadly, he has served as a director of Leadership Ocala Marion Chamber of Commerce and Economic Partnership, and on the advisory board of the University of Florida Institute for Food and Agriculture Sciences Plant Science and Research and Education unit in Citra.

He was born in Kansas City, MO just down I-70 from GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, KS but grew up and started in golf course maintenance in Georgia. He went to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College where he completed degrees in golf turf management and commercial turf management.

He arrived at On Top of the World in 2005 where, in addition to the golf courses, he also helps coordinate landscape maintenance for about 4,400 of 5,200 homes in the community that has a footprint of about 4,500 acres.

Aaron Martin

Born in Gainesville, GA, Martin grew up in the greater Atlanta Area. He graduated from Auburn University in 2014 with a degree in agricultural business and economics and, a week later, joined Helena as an intern. His duties included everything from making deliveries, to warehouse work, invoicing, product trials and sales training.

After his internship, he became a full time RX 360 specialist helping run agroeconomic services in Atlanta. He obtained a turfgrass management certificate from the University of Georgia and other certifications through organizations like the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

In 2015, he became a sales representative in golf and lawncare markets covering north and west Georgia from Macon to Chattanooga TN.

In October 2016, he moved to Florida as the first Helena golf representative in the state. "That turned out to be one of the best decisions I've made," he says.

In 2019, he was promoted to branch manager for Florida turf and ornamentals, retaining his sales role for southwest Florida from Tampa to Naples, while managing sales representatives the company has added since that year. Martin lives in St Petersburg with wife, Victoria. The couple is currently building a house in Bradenton and looks forward to planting more roots in the Sunshine State.



Aaron Martin

Jim Staub

Jim Staub serves as vice-president of golf for Wesco Turf and has done since 2017. In that role he leads all golf industry related businesses at Wesco Turf, including commercial golf, irrigation and pre-owned divisions.

Before that, Staub was with Club Car from 1996 to 2016 at various places across the country in roles ranging from general manager southeast, national account sales, after-market business development, and customer service.

He has master of business administration and bachelor of science degrees from the University of Florida where he was also a member of the varsity golf team that won the NCAA Championship in 1993 and was SEC champion from 1991-'94.

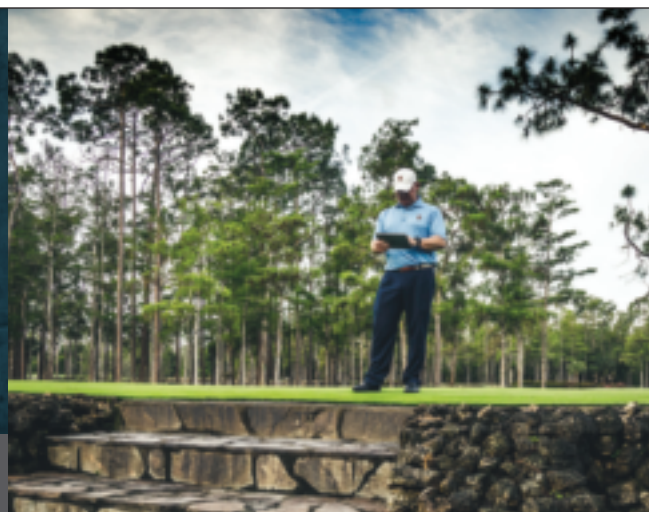
Staub lives in Sarasota and has two daughters, Maddy, a freshman at the University of Alabama, and Katy, a junior at Lake Mary High School. ■



Jim Staub

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Rudder Rights Ship AFTER SHAKY START

Some debut nerves almost put an early end to Max Rudder's ambitions in the championship flight of the 25th annual Florida GCSA Steven Wright Memorial Golf Tournament at the end of July. Playing in the event for the first time, Rudder, 28, from Venice Golf and Country Club in Venice, followed an opening bogey with a triple on the next hole. At four over par after two holes, he was already near the tail-end of the field.

He made par on his third hole before moving to the back nine where he found his game shooting three under and clawed his way back into contention. It took a 40-foot putt on his final hole to get his round back to even par and get into a playoff against Walter Chavez from Miami Beach Golf Club. Rudder sealed his victory with a bogey on the first playoff hole after Chavez put his approach shot into the water and finished with a double bogey.

For Chavez, it was yet one more case of so close yet so far. He also lost the previous state championship, in 2019, in a playoff. Earlier that year, he lost the Everglades GCSA's Poa Annua Classic in another playoff. Then he was second in the Poa again this year.

"I don't know what it is. I'm playing well but just can't seem to

win for some reason," Chavez says. "But I'm going to come first one time soon I hope." He hoped to break that drought at the rescheduled GCSAA Golf Championships in Palm Springs, CA mid-October.

Chavez grew up caddying in his native Argentina and eventually started giving lessons. Spending his days on the driving range, he practiced constantly and became good enough that he thought about pursuing the game when he moved to the U.S. as a 20-year-old.

"But I started working on the golf course maintenance side and fell in love with it," says Chavez, now 41 and whose handicap index was 0.2 heading to Palm Springs. It was only his second time competing in the national championship. He finished seventh in his only other start, in 2020, and might have been in contention but for nerves in the first round.

"I was a little tense being the first time. A little nervous for sure," he says. "I shot six over on the first day then I woke up and shot one under in the second round."

Rudder admits to his own case of nerves early in his round at



Bryce Koch, CGCS Cypress Lake Country Club; Paul Bacon, Crown Colony Golf and Country Club; Tom Caliguire, Forest Glen Golf and Country Club; and Jim Torba, Pelican Preserve Golf Club, won the gross division of the chapter team championship for the Everglades GCSA.

Longboat Key. A poor iron shot on his opening hole, a par three, was followed by a three putt. "There were some nerves. It had been a long time since I'd gotten to compete in a tournament like that," he says. "It was really fun to have that feeling again. It's great to play in these events and make connections and broaden your network. I've tried to do that to in Suncoast GCSA events."

Rudder won a state championship at high school level in his native Nebraska, but his game has taken a back seat since to moving to Florida, where he spent some time at Laurel Oaks Country Club before joining fellow-Nebraskan Nick Kearns at The Oaks Club. When Kearns, a Florida GCSA past-president,

moved to Venice Golf and Country Club in 2020, Rudder followed soon after.

The Everglades GCSA team of Paul Bacon from Crown Colony Golf and Country Club, Tom Caliguire from Forest Glen Golf and Country Club, Bryce Koch, CGCS from Cypress Lake Country Club, and Jim Torba, Pelican Preserve Golf Club, won the state chapter team championship.

This year's Florida GCSA Steven Wright Memorial Golf Tournament was contested over two courses at The Resort at Longboat Key, thanks to host John Reilly. ■

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT

GROSS

- 1 - Max Rudder, *Venice Golf and Country Club** 71
- 2 - Shane Wiley, *The Great Outdoors RV and Golf Resort* 73
- 3 - Tyler Brown, *Talis Park Golf Club* 76

NET

- 1 - Walter Chavez, *Miami Beach Golf Club* 71-1-70
- 2 - Paul Bacon, *Crown Colony Golf and Country Club* 75-5-70
- 3 - Scott Tullis, *Jacaranda West Country Club* 79-5-74

*Won on first playoff hole

CHAPTER TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

GROSS

- 1 - Everglades GCSA 322
Paul Bacon, *Crown Colony Golf and Country Club*
Jim Torba, *Pelican Preserve Golf Club*
Tom Caliguire, *Forest Glen Golf and Country Club*
Bryce Koch, *CGCS Cypress Lake Country Club*

NET

- 1 - South Florida GCSA 308
Joe Pantaleo, *Pine Tree Golf Club*
Kenton Gamache, *The Club at Boca Pointe*
Bob Harper, *Lago Mar Country Club*
Walter Chavez, *Miami Beach Golf Club*
Chris Monserrate, *Grand Palms Resort*

CLOSEST TO THE PIN

- No. 5 - Chris Spence, *Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club*
- No. 8 - Jason Bagwell, *Gleneagles Country Club*
- No. 12 - Jason Bagwell, *Gleneagles Country Club*
- No. 17 - Paul Bacon, *Crown Colony Golf and Country Club*

SCRAMBLE

GROSS

- 1 - Josh Waring, *Trigon Turf Services*
Bryce Gibson, *Interlachen Country Club* 66

NET

- 1 - Sean Shoffit, *Beard Equipment*
Robby Boyd, *TPC Prestancia* 64.2

RED TO WHITE

GROSS

- 1 - Richard Colyer, *Golf Agronomics*
Dan Haubein, *Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club* 67

NET

- 1 - Andy Jorgensen, *CGCS On Top of the World*
Pierce Wright, *Honorary member* 66.6
- 2 - Eric Oster, *Golf Club of the Everglades*
Andy Reid 67.9

WHITE TO BLUE

GROSS

- 1 - Scott Ford, *Wesco Turf*
K.C. Ezell, *Wesco Turf* 68

NET

- 1 - Vernon Jones, *Plant Health Solutions*
Ken Maltby, *Black Bear Golf Club* 65.2
- 2 - Chris Miller, *ProPlus Products*
Clay Batson, *Ritz-Carlton Members Club* 68

BLUE TO RED

GROSS

- 1 - Mike Giddens, *Helena*
Dustin Plemons, *Cleveland Heights Golf Club* 67

NET

- 1 - Aaron Martin, *Helena*
Eddie MacDonald, *St. Petersburg Country Club* 69
- 2 - Cisco Navas, *Cypress Woods Golf and Country Club*
Nick Forest, *E-Z-GO* 73

CLOSEST TO THE PIN

Red

- No. 3 - Billy Boone
- No. 6 - Renze Berg, *River Strand Golf and Country Club*

Blue

- No. 3 - Dustin Plemons, *Cleveland Heights Golf Club*
- No. 7 - Aaron Martin, *Helena*

White

- No. 5 - Reed Williams, *Cushman/Textron*
- No. 7 - Scott Corwin, *Timber Pines Community Association Golf Course*



Florida GCSA 2021 golf champion Max Rudder, from Venice Golf and Country Club, with his trophies presented by Florida GCSA golf committee chair and nine-time past winner, Deron Zendt.



Ken Maltby, Black Bear Golf Club, Vernon Jones, Redox; and K.C. Ezell, Wesco Turf, were among winners in the White to Blue Flight.



Andy Jorgensen, On Top of the World; Richard Colyer, Golf Agromonics; and Dan Haubein, Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club, were among winners in the Red to White Flight.

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Kristie and Paul Hurst of Midlife provided great entertainment at a reception on the eve of the golf tournament.



Bryce Gibson, Interlachen Country Club, and Josh Waring, Trigon Turf, were gross division winners in the team scramble.



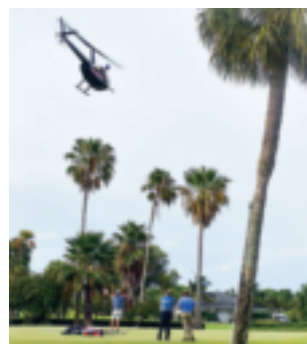
GCSAA leaders, secretary-treasurer Kevin Sunderman, CGCS from Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club; chief operating officer Rhett Evans; and former president, Darren Davis, CGCS from Olde Florida Golf Club.



Dustin Plemmons, Cleveland Heights Golf Club; Mike Giddens, Helena; Eddie McDonald, St. Petersburg Country Club; and Aaron Martin, Helena; were among winners in the Blue to Red Flight



Joe Pantaleo, Pine Tree Golf Club; Bob Harper, Lago Mar Country Club; and Walter Chavez, Miami Beach Golf Club, were members of the South Florida GCSA team that won the net division of the chapter team championship.



A helicopter dropped marked golf balls onto a practice green beside the golf reception for a special closest-to-the-pin competition.

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BMP Certification Critical as LOCAL ORDINANCES INCREASE

by Seth McKeel and David Shepp

Greetings from The Southern Group. We hope that everyone had a healthy, safe and productive summer as we continue to move ever closer to a sense of normalcy throughout Florida. Now that the summer break has ended, the focus in Tallahassee shifts to preparing for the 2022 legislative session.

Senators and Representatives returned to the Capitol in mid-September for the first week of committee meetings. The week consisted mainly of reconstituting the committees, defining their agendas for the coming year and receiving State agency reports. The best part of the committee week was that the Capitol is once again open for business to the public.

Legislators are now beginning to file bills for consideration during the 2022 session. There will be five more committee weeks, spread across October and November, in order to get everything in proper posture for the start of session on January 11.

This summer, your lobbying team worked with the Florida GCSA board and government relations committee to develop



David Shepp



Seth McKeel

a legislative agenda for the session. A bill is being drafted that will memorialize the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Florida's golf courses in Florida Statute. The goal is to provide public assurance that golf course superintendents are committed to Florida's environment and water quality and receive the training necessary to be good stewards of the land.



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The proposed legislation would provide for a voluntary, four-year certification, administered by UF/IFAS, along with continuing education requirements for recertification. The benefits of certification include an exemption from additional local testing as well as an exemption from local ordinance regulations relating to water and fertilizer applications. We are currently in discussions with members of the House and Senate to identify bill sponsors and submit the language to bill drafting to get the process underway.

One of the major environmental events of 2021 that highlighted the need for this legislation was the Piney Point spill in Manatee County in late March. The breach in the wall of the abandoned phosphate reservoir pond resulted in more than 200 million gallons of polluted water entering Tampa Bay. A significant red tide in the region event lasted throughout the summer, leading to heightened media attention and public outcry, and renewed calls for restrictions on all fertilizers and other nutrient sources, primarily at the local level.

While the blackout threat is primarily at the city and county level, we will need to be prepared to defend against any legislative efforts introduced to restrict the use of fertilizers for golf courses during the upcoming session.

Hillsborough County quickly responded to the Piney Point disaster by proposing an ordinance to create a six-month summer

fertilizer blackout period. We worked with a county commissioner, who was also instrumental in writing the City of Tampa's ordinance in 2011, to ensure that BMP-certified golf courses would be exempt from the ordinance.

The proposed ordinance was to be introduced in late October, with passage likely by the end of the year. As of this writing, Orange County has also announced a stakeholder meeting in late October to discuss proposed changes to their fertilizer management ordinance.

The frequency of local ordinance proposals highlights the need for legislative action to provide an exemption for those golf courses that put forth the effort to have their employees trained, and certified, in the best management practices to protect water quality and Florida's natural environment. Golf course superintendents are stewards of the land and are committed to ensuring the health and safety of their environment.

We will keep the membership of the Florida GCSA informed every step of the way as this legislation moves forward. We will also begin planning the Florida GCSA's in-person advocacy efforts during the 2022 session and look forward to seeing everyone in Tallahassee once again. Thank you for the honor of representing Florida GCSA. We wish everyone all the best. ■

-Seth McKeel and David Shepp with The Southern Group and lead Florida GCSA government relations efforts



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Looking Within Could be Your Key TO BETTER RESULTS AND A HAPPIER LIFE

by Kevin Sunderman

Frustrated with the world around you? Do you not understand why people make the decisions they make or do the things that they do? Why can't people see things your way, even after you've explained it repeatedly? Rather than questioning others, try looking within.

I tend to be a perfectionist by nature, not full-blown OCD, but I want things to be done right. Whether it's raking a bunker, mowing a cleanup pass or something more significant like making important life decisions, I take the time to make sure the outcome is the best it can be. I attribute this trait to my parents who are hardworking Midwesterners, who grew up on farms. They took the attitude that if you were going to do something, you did it to the best of your ability every time. Hard work done right produces good results and a more rewarding life.

Having approached my entire life with the "Do it right" mantra, you can imagine my frustration every time someone didn't put forth the same effort in pursuit of perfect mowing lines or straight flagsticks when changing hole locations. I remember my college human resources professor teaching the idea that poor employee performance was a result of one of two things, either a lack of training or a lack of motivation. There are some



Kevin Sunderman, CGCS

holes in this theory but some truth as well.

Reverting to this concept, I'd repeatedly explain to an employee how to do the tasks and describe the desired outcome using every conceivable method. I'd try the carrot as well as the stick. I'd offer praise or condemnation. While oftentimes the results improved quickly with a simple retraining or words of encouragement, sometimes things never improved. Why not? What's so hard? Why don't they care? Frustrating.

Thoroughly analytical in all parts of life, I think through everything and look for the best solution the first time. I enjoy deconstructing and reconstructing processes, planning, and executing to the best of my ability. I look for the potential problems, solutions to those problems and find ways to work around obstacles. With the destination in mind, I'll look for the best route taking into consideration quality, time and safety.

This leaves me cringing when I see my neighbor push-mowing his lawn in bare feet while carrying his 4-year-old daughter on his shoulders. I'm sure it's a great workout and bonding time with his girl, but can he not see the possible ramifications? What could possibly go wrong?

Several years ago, I was pitching a concept to a group of people. I had well thought out what I was presenting. It made sense, offered opportunity for all involved and, in my mind, should have been a slam dunk. After a lengthy presentation, conversations ensued, yet nobody was biting.

I remember thinking to myself, they must not have heard what I'm saying. I'd repeat all the opportunities and arguments with slightly different language. Still no bites. I'd repeat the process again and think to myself, "Why don't people understand? I've done my homework. This is the way to go. Are they not listening? What's the issue?"

In many ways we've seen the world become a divisive and selfish place. Everyone knows what's best for them and for everyone else, and they're not afraid to let you know that. Often from behind the screen on social media, people spout their opinions and criticize those of others. At times, I'm sure we've all been the target of criticism, whether online or in person. I'm sure we've all also been the critic.

Unfortunately, golf course superintendents receive their share of criticism. Sometimes it's warranted, other times off base, but rarely is it constructive and delivered with good intentions. Why are some people so venomous? Why do they make things personal? How do we get past it and work together to find a solution? How do we let things go and not let others get to us?

The aforementioned scenarios used to drive me crazy. I couldn't understand why people did the things they did, said what they said, or simply wouldn't acknowledge ideas or opinions expressed. This all changed in 2018 in what I now recognize as one of the most impactful years of my life.

I have the privilege of serving the golf course management industry as a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) board of directors. The board focuses primarily on setting strategic direction for GCSAA. 2018 was my second year on the board and Darren Davis, CGCS from Olde Florida Golf Club, was president.

Darren made it a priority to focus on the TEAM concept of Together Everyone Accomplishes More. Having read the book, "Five Dysfunctions of a Team," by Patrick Lencioni, Darren recognized an opportunity to take our performance as a board to a higher level through the building of trust and improved communication.

Throughout the year, we engaged in a number of teambuilding exercises including taking personality tests and sharing the results. It's what I learned from these tests that changed how I view the world around me.

Many of us have likely taken a personality test at some point. I know I've taken at least three as part of hiring processes. There is an abundance of different tests available. They all have their own

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proprietary way of analyzing the person and communicating results, but most work in similar ways.

You answer a series of questions about what you like, don't like, word associations, how others perceive you, how you perceive yourself, how you would respond in certain scenarios, etc. The tests then analyze your results based on a mountain of data and psychological studies that compare your answers with how other test subjects answered the same questions. The answers one gives determines how the results are classified.

The GCSAA board took two tests in 2018. The first was Myers-Briggs. This is a very popular assessment that judges how you direct and receive energy (extraversion/introversion), how you take in information (sensing/intuition), your decision-making process and how you come to conclusions (thinking/feeling) and how you approach the outside world (judging/perceiving).

The category names are basic but represent a much more significant description. According to the results, I'm an ESTJ (extraversion, sensing, thinking, judging). If you've never taken a personality test before, let me warn you, the results are eerily accurate. Even when you are borderline between two categories - I'm barely an E - the test takes that into consideration.

Diving into deeper definitions of what makes an ESTJ, I find terms such as analytical, adept at organizing projects and people, values competence and results, focuses on present using the past to help guide, conscientious, dependable, decisive, and self-confident. I believe, all of those describe me.

Reading pages of detailed descriptions for ESTJs, I found very accurate depictions of how I think, feel and behave. The few areas that may not have resonated as strongly were probably due to my borderline extraversion/introversion categorization.

About two months later, we took the Predictive Index behavioral assessment. Once again, the results were spot on. What's interesting is that everyone on the board agreed that their Myers-Briggs and Predictive Index results described them almost perfectly. So, while we all took these tests and saw our own results, it was when we shared the results that the lightbulb came on for me. People are different.

People. Are. Different.

It seems obvious, right? Of course, I knew that people had different likes, opinions and ideas but I had never given much consideration to the fact that different people process information in different ways, communicate in different ways and are motivated or inspired in different ways. And believe it or not, someone's strongest attributes may also be their biggest weaknesses in the eyes of others.

This explains why some people are never going to mow a straight line or cut a straight pin. It's not that they don't care, but when you look at what motivates them, they can't help but rush to get things done. Production trumps quality in their minds. Giving them detail-oriented tasks to complete is like trying to fit a

square peg into a round hole. While you can try to force them to get better, you are increasing their discomfort and decreasing job satisfaction at the same time. It's more important to find another task that fits who they are internally.

It's important to me to produce correct results and minimize mistakes. I seek out all possible solutions and dissect them before making a decision. When others don't take time, and instead jump to their first choice without fearing consequences if they are wrong, it used to really bother me. I saw it as either a sign of not caring or overconfidence in assuming they have the right answers.

What I now understand is that my tedious process for decision making drove these people crazy. They didn't want to be dragged down into the weeds as it felt like a waste of time to them. It was more important to them to continue pushing forward and if something ended up not being right, they could fix it when the time came.

I see this scenario come up quite frequently at work, maybe in recommendations from committee members to initiate a project that appears to be a good idea but may have other implications. What I've learned to do in these situations is to request time to explore the idea further, citing any concerns I may have. Putting a specified deadline on the review, I respond with agreement to move forward or reasons for pulling back prior to this deadline.

This simple action of investigation with a timeline is enough to appease those who want to push forward while accommodating my need to fully vet ideas. Circumstances such as paving new cart paths would fall into this category. On the contrary, when the stakes are lower, such as putting in a new flower bed, I engage quickly without hesitation.

Knowing that I have a propensity to take the simplest of decisions and turn them into a monumental task, I now work to make decisions quicker, at least the ones that aren't significant. This allows more time to focus on things that truly matter. Imagine my wife's surprise when I bought a television with only one-hour worth of research, rather than a week's worth!

When it comes to communication, I tend to be direct. I tell others what I like, don't like and how I feel. I choose my words carefully, never losing my temper, but my true feelings are difficult to hide. I don't mean to offend but prefer getting to the right solution. I want and expect others to be direct with me as well. If there's an issue with something, let's solve it.

Understanding now that others may be uneasy or offended by my approach or that there are people who go out of their way to not be offensive themselves, I try to adapt my communication to appeal to the needs of the other individuals.

Matching the other person's communication style goes a long way towards improving results. I had an employee who was struggling to learn how to change cups. They appeared to have the right demeanor and desire to perform the job correctly but just couldn't get it right. Every time I would try to explain the

process and walk them through step by step, they just seemed to get more nervous.

I changed my approach and started asking them questions, putting them in control of the conversation. They were able to talk themselves through the process and identify their mistakes on their own. This individual was not a direct-type communicator. Rather than me communicating the process directly to them, it was more effective to communicate using a more passive approach.

When presenting my points of view, I have a tendency to be extremely thorough in delivery. After all, the extensive data is what I use to formulate my own opinions. However, some people need the delivery in one or two sentences. Any more than that and they lose interest.

This is an area in which I have really adjusted my behavior. Especially when communicating with members, I work to provide only the highest level of information. When the question arises, "Why don't you cut the rough shorter," instead of giving the entire picture of rain, equipment breakdowns, labor shortages, 1/3 grass blade removal rule, etc. I simply reply, "There's a number of factors that contribute to this but four days of rain in the past week has prevented us from keeping on schedule." This makes sense to the member and satisfies their need for answers without it sounding like a plethora of excuses, even if they all apply. I can always elaborate if the need presents itself.

The personality test exercises in 2018 brought about a better sense of self-awareness and a heightened appreciation for others' differences.

Learning to recognize others' personalities is a skill I am still developing. While it's not easy to pinpoint someone's personality type in its entirety, it's not difficult to identify one or two dominant characteristics and modify my approach taking those characteristics into account. As a result of having greater awareness of myself and others, I have seen relationships improve, team performance get better and have taken on less stress resulting from the behavior of others.

As this evolution of my interpretation of people and the world around me continues, where I used to observe or make judgment, I now seek to understand. This one change, the change from observation to understanding, has made me calmer, less anxious, more accepting and less offended by what others do or say.

Everyone is wired in their own way. We all perceive the world differently, and who am I to say that I am right and they are

wrong? Rather, how can I connect with those from whom I differ? What is important to them? How can we communicate and exchange ideas?

Identifying someone's personality traits, what motivates them and how they best communicate are valuable skills that will improve your relationships at home, at work and anywhere else in life. I truly believe that every team can improve its results by understanding each other and how they think.

Googling "personality test," will turn up an abundance of results. Often there are free options. Based on personal experience, I would start with Myers-Briggs or Predictive Index. You can usually take a basic free assessment. It will most likely take no more than 20-30 minutes. Results are often provided immediately after taking the test. For more in-depth individual analysis, you can start by paying a small fee, most likely \$50 to \$100. From there you have many options to include personal growth and team analysis.

Seek to first understand yourself, what motivates you and how others may perceive your behavior. Then seek to understand those around you, what's important to them and how you can best come together. Doing so may just change your life. It has mine. ■

- Kevin Sunderman, CGCS is director of grounds at Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club in St. Petersburg and secretary-treasurer of GCSAA



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Ruha the Renovator

Shadow Wood Shines Anew

by Trent Bouts

It's a running joke among the extended family that Eric Ruha was fired from his first job on grass. A neighbor hired him to mow as a 12-year-old but after the second cut, the neighbor told the kid to leave his green and white Lawn-Boy mower alone and not come back. "He said, 'You can't mow straight lines and you're making my yard look like crap. You're outta here!'" Ruha laughs.

The joke has grown over the years, in tandem with Ruha's career. Not that he mows much these days. As director of golf course operations at Shadow Wood Country Club in Bonita Springs, he has larger concerns with oversight of three courses - the Bob Cupp designed North and South, and the Arthur Hills designed Preserve.

From 2017 to 2020, he renovated all three, one by one, a remarkable feat of endurance in the best of times. But with Hurricane Irma in 2017 and the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the going was anything but smooth.

Irma produced 12 inches of rain at Shadow Wood, on the back of 15 inches two weeks earlier. Fortunately, the North course greens were established, and turf damage was minimal. Still, more than 200 trees came crashing down.



After three renovations in four years at Shadow Wood Country Club, Eric Ruha has now spent 25 percent of his career focusing on grow-ins.

"Bag drop guys were coming to help us, kitchen staff were coming to help us," Ruha says. "Whoever was on property who could throw log into a trailer, we were employing them. It was a frenzy to try and get cleaned up."

When COVID-19 shut down travel early in the project on the Preserve, Ruha used drone footage and FaceTime to provide virtual site visits for designers at Rees Jones, Inc. The Jones team had some experience with virtual visits over several projects in Japan, but Ruha, not so much.

"I'd really only done FaceTime with my mom before," he says. "So, it was kind of weird holding up the phone with an architect in New Jersey and going, 'Hey man. Now, here's this bunker. How does this look? Do you want to change anything?'"

Ruha played remote host for about four weeks before Rees Jones and senior designer Bryce Swanson could get back on site. "Nobody was flying," he says. "Everybody was scared. It was a weird time. Bizarre." Despite those obstacles, the only exception to coming in on time and on budget with all three renovations was a week or so delay in reopening the North course.

That success only came about, Ruha says, because of the efforts of a lot of people, including his own team led by current super-

intendents Ryan Czaplewski at the Preserve, Mike Fasy on the South, and Ben Stoner, North. "I've been very blessed to have great team members from crew personnel to assistants and superintendents," he says. "We are a well-rounded team that I challenge to produce great conditions every day."

In turn, his team had the backing of another strong group. "My general manager, Brian Bartolec; director of golf, Andy Scrivner; and CFO, Soren Spiers; these guys are the heart of the operations that support us, and we them," Ruha says. "And Brian is a golf guy, from the PGA side. He rides the course with me every day. When I tell peers that, they say, 'Isn't that a pain?' But I think it helps because he's up to speed. If he gets stopped up at the clubhouse with a question, he can get in front of any potential issues right away because he knows what's going on."

Continuity across the renovations was also a big factor in their success.

"Having Glase Golf Construction and the same construction manager, Darwin Sharp, for all three projects was awesome," Ruha says. "And Rees Jones and his people were absolutely the best. There was never a 'This is the way it's going to be, and we don't care if you can maintain it' attitude."

"They wanted to know if the mowers would fit here and there,

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The Ruha family: Eric, Kara, Johnathan and Evelyn.



A stunning look down the par 4 fourth hole on the South course.

that kind of thing. They wanted to know what we needed to balance the vision of Rees Jones and the sustainability aspect. That was never missed on all three courses.”

The operation also ran smoother from project to project, a fact Ruha attributes to getting off to a great start with the North course. Situated between I-75 and South Tamiami Trail, at the mid-point between Naples and Fort Myers, Shadow Wood sits amid some of the most concentrated golf terrain in the state. And Ruha made the most of the knowledge on his doorstep.

“We did our due diligence, for sure,” he says. “There’s no secrets among greenkeepers. In the community of peers right here, I was able to pick up the phone and ask questions of a number of guys who had just done renovations. You know, ‘How did this go? What would you do differently if you could?’ That all went into the hopper, and we felt really strong going into the North project.”

Shadow Wood’s first course, the South, was built in 1998 and at 140 acres, is one of the largest in Lee and Collier counties. A visiting vendor was once blown away by the “oceans of turf.” The North, which opened in 2000, is a step down at 120 acres, and the Preserve, 2002, is small by comparison with 80 acres.

Having arrived as assistant superintendent for the grow-in at the Preserve in 2002, he was promoted to superintendent in 2004. When Kenyon Kyle left in 2008, he added the North and South and the title of director. Ruha’s intimate knowledge of all three properties was another factor in the efficiency of the renovations.

On all three courses, greens were cored out, recontoured, reshaped and grassed with TifEagle bermudagrass. New loop irrigation was installed on all greens. Bunkers were reshaped and some repositioned, with Bunker Solutions liner installed in all. Forward tees were also added, expanding the number of teeing options to 10 on most holes. “Something for everyone,” Ruha says. Overgrown landscaping and wood lines were cut back providing views and increasing breathability.

All fairways, tees, collars and approaches had already been regrassed between 2013 and 2015 with Celebration bermudagrass replacing 419 that had declined with off-types creating significant inconsistencies during peak season.

Ruha made two notable adjustments for the South and Preserve as a result of his experience with the North course.

The first was to grass greens in nine-hole groups, rather than six, six and six. “Six-hole batches worked okay on the North, but I thought nines would be a little more manageable in terms of fertility, spraying and so on,” he says. “If we could get the first lot done by the middle of June and the next by a drop-dead date at the end of July, we would be in good shape when members started coming down from up north in October.”

The other, after a suggestion from a colleague, was to effectively grow bigger greens than he needed. What he calls “overgrassing” meant laying sprigs about two sod cutter widths out into the collars. “This was sacrificial turf that we would come back in and replace with Celebration sod around the five- or six-week mark,” he says. “This gave us a very crisp, non-contam-



Shadow Wood's agronomic leadership team, from left, Ryan Czaplewski (Preserve), Ben Stoner (North), Mike Fasy (South) and Eric Ruha, director of agronomy.

inated edge. We had zero problems with Celebration runners taking over the TifEagle, and it worked great.”

Eric Ruha's neighbor may have canned him all those years ago, but his grandfather, Bill Campanizzi, was more forgiving. He let his grandson mow his yard with “one of those Toro rear-bagger, bullet proof, never die, units,” Ruha says. That didn't mean Campanizzi was a pushover. A former beat cop who, during a tough time in a tough town - Youngstown, OH - became a detective and chief of narcotics, Campanizzi was all about work ethic.

Perhaps not surprisingly then, Campanizzi's daughter, Marsha, Ruha's mother, was “the eternal disciplinarian” as well as “a gourmet cook.” His father, Emil, spent 35 years on production with General Motors. Ruha describes his upbringing as proudly blue collar.

“My dad and my grandfather were both great guys,” Ruha says. “They believed in hard work pays off. Believed in using your head, treating people the way you want to be treated. I've always lived by that. I drill those idioms into guys when I talk to them. I don't care if you've got experience. We can train you so long as you come to work on time, have a good attitude and can learn. That's everything.”

That's pretty much what Ruha had to offer when he interviewed for his first job in golf course maintenance with Terry Buchen at Double Eagle Golf Club in Galena, just north of Columbus. To that point, Ruha had been through a couple of unsatisfying years in college, first in accounting at Mercyhurst, PA, where he was also a placekicker, and then in general studies at

Youngstown State.

He spent summers doing “hot and dirty work” in the steel mills for \$9 an hour before his grandfather, who knew the grandson reveled in the outdoors, said, “You know, you can actually go to school and get a degree to work on a golf course.” It was a light bulb moment.

Ruha enrolled in the turfgrass program at The Ohio State University and a career was born. Although by his own admission, Ruha had an awful lot to learn. Mowing straight lines was only part of it. The first time he played golf, as a teenager, he used a tee for every shot until his buddies eventually set him straight. And even by the time he sat down with Buchen, he had no clue what kind of facility Double Eagle was.

“I didn't really know anything about anything on a golf course,” Ruha says. “I told Terry I was able bodied, and that I could push a mower and use a shovel. I could do work. No more questions asked, he said, ‘We hire a lot every summer at \$7.25 an hour and if you're in the turf program at Ohio State, you can work as much overtime as you want.’”

Ruha did the math. It was less per hour than the steel mills but along with the overtime, he knew enough to recognize an investment in his career when it was right in front of him. “They couldn't kick me out of that place,” he says. “If I wasn't in school, I was working, and I still pushed 30- to 40-hour work weeks even when I was in school with a full course load.”

Double Eagle, built by the late industrialist, John McConnell, who did his own time in steel mills on his way up, remains one

of the most exclusive clubs in the country. Ruha was there from 1994 to 1999, the last four years with Todd Voss. But as much as he learned from both Buchen and Voss, he had little clue about golf course maintenance in the real world.

“Double Eagle is a total anomaly,” Ruha says. “At that point of time, if we had 20 golfers a day that was a busy day. And the caddies, they would name drop who was coming that day, people like Archie Griffen, lots of NBA stars, NHL stars. I thought, wow, that’s kind of cool. So, when I left there, that was the reality I knew – not even 20 golfers a day and celebrities!”

Voss knew better and made sure the kid did too. “He sat me down and said, ‘Look, you know what quality is. That is what you take from here, you know what good turf looks like and you know what it takes. You’ll have to modify that to your resources wherever you go but you know what quality is.’”

Late in 1999, Ruha moved south to work as an assistant on the grow-in of the Arthur Hills course at Fiddlers Creek near Marco Island. All told, Ruha has now been part of five grow-ins. “Twenty-five percent of my career has been doing grow-ins,” he laughs. “Honestly, I love it. I like construction but if you ask my wife, Kara, she might say it’s time to take a break and take some vacations.”

Like many successful superintendents, Ruha credits much of where he is to his wife. Married for 12 years, he says Kara’s “patience and understanding are second to none.” “When we take course rides, she always marvels at the work and detail that go into the beautiful product my team produces,” he says. “Coming from her, that compliment never gets old.”

With daughter Evelyn, 8, and son, Johnathan, 6, the Ruhas have taken some short breaks since wrapping up at the Preserve. Some quick trips to the Keys and few Disney visits. “With the kids at that age, they just light up when we go,” Ruha says. “It is just magic.” Most recently, the family rented a cabin in the mountains of north Georgia, where Ruha found himself partial to coffee on the patio in a sweatshirt in September. “You can keep the beach,” he laughs.

One other destination he’d like to try is “out West.” And he just might have a place to stay. Kyle, his old boss at Shadow Wood and who recommended Ruha take his place, now owns a restaurant, bar and accommodations called Wapiti Lodge in Wyoming, near Yellowstone National Park. The two stayed in close contact after Kyle left Shadow Wood for Audubon Country Club, “just down the road.”

“About one week in front of him heading out West, he texts me on a Friday and says, ‘Hey, (wife) Beth and I just bought a lodge in Wyoming,’” Ruha recalls. “I said, ‘Woah. We need to have a brown drink and discuss this matter. And we did and he told me the whole story. My jaw dropped and I said, ‘Hey, man, that’s great.’ And he’s loving it.”

In an ideal world, there’s someone else Ruha would like to call on, maybe over a brown drink. That neighbor who sent him away all those years ago. “But the guy passed away before I got into this business,” Ruha says. “It’s one of those, if-he-could-see-me-now kind of things. I’m sure we would both have a great laugh.” ■



The par 4 fourth hole on the North course.



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Winslow Overcomes Hurricane's HARSH WELCOME AT THE GLADES

Adam Winslow and his "pretty tight stand" of Platinum paspalum at The Glades Golf and Country Club.

You know golf courses are in your blood when your dream renovation project becomes a nightmare, but you'd do it again if given the chance. Adam Winslow had just completed his first 12 months as a golf course superintendent at The Glades Golf and Country Club in Naples when Hurricane Irma lashed Florida in September of 2017.

At the time, Winslow was half-way through a complete renovation of the club's regulation 18-hole Pines course. "I was so blessed to have the opportunity to do a grow-in. It was a dream of mine," he says. "Then Hurricane Irma came on September 11, and it was catastrophic."

The front nine was mostly grassed, with Platinum paspalum, but the back nine was a different story. While greens were recently sprigged, the rest was bare earth. The storm "blew it all out," Winslow says. "We had to go back and regrade and resprig. There were trees and debris everywhere. The whole community was a war zone. It was brutal."

You would never know it today. The Pines course and The Glades' second facility, an 18-hole par three course dubbed The Palmetto, in the bundled community of 1,263 doors, both look sharp and clean enough they could be computer generated. Winslow says the decision to go wall-to-wall with the same grass coupled with extensive new drainage on the golf course and in the community certainly help.

But the single biggest factor in getting him so far after Irma, he

says, is equipment manager, foreman and "jack of all trades" Sam Granados. "I inherited Sam when I came here, and he is excellent. Trying to pick ourselves up after the hurricane, when morale was down a little bit, having someone like him to help was incredible. He is one heck of a guy."

Granados is one of a staff of 19 that Winslow has pieced together since arriving. After some initial changes, the majority have now been with him for most of his tenure. And continuity counts. As he says, "Turnover is expensive. I've been pretty blessed with a wonderful staff."

Winslow grew up in Imlay City, MI, a tiny town east of Flint, where his father was a police officer for 36 years. Winslow learned to play golf on a course "amongst the cow pastures" about 15 minutes away, in Lum, and as soon as he was old enough, he was working there. By the end of high school, he knew the game would be his life, but initially, he thought it would be as a PGA professional.

Winslow went to Ferris State University where he completed the Professional Golf Management program and graduated with a business degree. Part of the course work during his final internship, in the pro shop at Wyndermere Country Club in Naples, FL, was to ride the course with the golf course superintendent. "That's when I met Pete Metcalf," he says.

Truth be told, Winslow knew in his freshman year that he wanted to be on the golf course and not behind the counter. The

relationship he developed with Metcalf provided not only his bridge across golf course maintenance but also a road map he would use for years to come.

"I knew early on in my heart of hearts that I wanted to be in golf course maintenance, but I also wanted to complete the PGM program," Winslow says. "I got a lesson in the school of hard knocks with Pete. Valuable lessons, absolutely."

Those lessons came after Winslow graduated, packed what he could fit into his Chevy Blazer and drove back down to Florida. "I ended up on the grounds crew at Quail Creek (Country Club) for Dave Fenton for about six months before T. J. Shine (now with WinField United) let me know there was a position at Wyndermere. I got hold of Pete and he took me on as an assistant," he says. "Then I went to night class through Edison (now Florida SouthWestern State College) and got my turf degree."

Winslow spent eight years under Metcalf, who died in 2019. When Metcalf was let go from Wyndermere, Winslow went to, taking a job with another Metcalf protégé, John Vingson, at Fox-Fire Country Club. His next role was with yet another product of the 'Metcalf school,' Kevin Shields, at Talis Park Golf Course.

After 18 months with Shields, Winslow took the job at The Glades in September of 2016, his first as golf course superintendent. "We have about 80 acres of golf course, with 60 on The Pines and 20 on The Palmetto," he says. "We produce a lot of rounds, about 60,000 between the two courses." The Glades uses all reclaimed water, hence the paspalum.

When Winslow arrived the greens "were in dire straits," suffering from deferred maintenance, partly to preserve budget for the renovations, he suspects. "The first thing we did was demolish the SeaDwarf nursery green to get those out on the golf course back, patch by patch," he says. "We got things looking so good again they actually talked about cancelling the renovations."

Heading into the renovations, one of Winslow's biggest challenges was getting rid of bermudagrass contamination, which he estimated at around 90 percent. The Glades' paspalum had been down since a renovation in 2003-'04 making it one of the pioneers with the grass.



Equipment manager Sam Granados is Adam Winslow's good friend and right-hand man.

"It was a total blow up," Winslow says. "Greens were redone to USGA specs, we have a new Rain Bird IC irrigation system, we redid every bunker, from the pump station out, everything was redone. We also reassessed all the bridges and bulkheads, redoing a lot of them as well."

Winslow was budgeted about 160,000 sq. ft. of sod for green and tee surrounds and sprigged fairways at a rate, he upped significantly for the renovation of The Palmetto course the following year. "I certainly don't recommend going below 1,000 bushels per acre," he says. "On The Pines course we were about 400 bushels per acre in the beginning and that was tough."

All of that is work enough in ideal conditions, but the weather wasn't cooperating long before Irma arrived. "When we started that summer, we had 20-plus inches of rain each month in June,

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A view from The Pines course across to the Palmetto course.

July and August. Then there was September,” Winslow says. “It was one of the most trying times of our lives.”

In the end, the hurricane pushed the reopening of The Pines back a full season. Along the way, Winslow says, “It took a lot of diplomacy, newsletters, town hall meetings, and discussions with the men’s and ladies’ golf associations to help everyone understand where we were. I’ll tell you, it took a very supportive membership and a very supportive club president in Dominic Passalacqua to make things work.”

To get rid of the bermudagrass, Winslow made three applications of Roundup and Fusilade, then skimmed the upper soil profile and deposited the lot in deep bury pits on site. The course was originally scheduled to reopen at the end of 2017, but the last sprigs didn’t go down until November, which pushed re-opening to mid-June of 2018.

“What that gave us though was time to work on the bermudagrass that came back,” Winslow says. “Cutting it out, redoing the profile, patching it with sod, about 22,000 sq. ft. all up. In some areas it was still aggressive. We really took advantage of the time, and we have a pretty tight stand of paspalum out there now.”

One thing Winslow didn’t have to worry about during the hurricane was his maintenance facility, which occupies buildings that were formerly the area’s water works. Two of his storage buildings are round tanks with 18-inch-thick concrete walls.

“I would do it again,” Winslow says of renovating a golf course. “There were some days when I had my ups and downs. But with that experience, I now know so many of the little things, the details that would make things a lot easier next time.” ■

- Trent Bouts



Some of the damage that Hurricane Irma wrought during the renovation of The Pines course in 2017.

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Stevens Blessed by Career LADEN WITH OPPORTUNITIES



Erin Stevens has helped oversee a re-energizing of Coral Creek Club since his arrival in 2019.

Most people find themselves at a fork in the road at some point during their working careers. For Erin Stevens, it was more of a T-intersection. No gradually diverging paths for him. Instead, Stevens' choice was one between opposites, as different, quite literally, as land and sea.

In one direction lay his newfound interest in golf course maintenance. In the other, a return to the U.S. Navy, which he served six years, including five in active service.

Stevens left the Navy in 1994 and with no concrete intentions, enrolled in a local college and also fell into golf course work. His father, himself a Navy man, was a member at "a couple of clubs" in Maryland and knew the general manager at Little Bennett Golf Course, west of Baltimore.

"I started picking up extra money working in golf course maintenance," Stevens says. "And I was really liking it." Impressed, the GM at Little Bennett eventually recommend him to the turf school at the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland.

In the meantime, Stevens had been contemplating a return to service and had even filed paperwork for naval officer school. Next thing he knew, he was accepted into both programs and, "I had a decision to make," he says. And it wasn't an easy one.

Sailing in service of the country was part of the family fabric. Two brothers were also Navy men. "It was my dad who sat me down," Stevens says, for a conversation he regards today as "my defining moment." Whatever the details of that discussion, the outcome was clear. As Stevens recalls, "I said, 'Okay. I'm going to go after golf. And I'm going to go after it hard.'"

He signed on to turf school and while there, true to his word, one day walked into the office at Congressional Country Club and lodged a job application. Talk about going after it hard. Congressional wasn't just one of the most celebrated clubs in the U.S., the club's superintendent, Paul Latshaw, was a giant of the profession even then.

Stevens, now golf course superintendent on the Tom Fazio-designed course at Coral Creek Club in Placida, grins at the memory.

"I chose Congressional because if I was going to be in the business, then I wanted to be around tournament preparation, to get that experience," he says. "And I wanted to learn under the highest levels of expertise. Under Mr. Latshaw, I had the opportunity to work for the best in the business."

Stevens' resume to that point no doubt piqued interest at Congressional. He may have been a turfgrass rookie, but he was far

from raw. In the Navy, he served on ships and in-shore boat units in the Gulf War, Somalia and later on counter-narcotics operations in Central America. He was more than ready for the rigors of the new environment he found himself in.

"I swear to God, at one point there (on 36 holes) under Mr. Latshaw, there were like 25 to 30 guys, all with turf degrees," Stevens says. "Whatever the number, it was a phenomenal amount. And we were all very competitive. There was a lot of trash talking but what was good about it was that everybody really made everybody else excel. It was cool for me learning in that environment. Coming out of the military, I was very disciplined. I'm not saying I was an angel. But I was very disciplined."

Disciplined enough that he could manage a full class load while still putting in "40 to 50 hours a week" at Congressional. In 1997, as the club prepared to host the U.S. Open, Stevens says, "I remember going to school then going back to the club in the evenings and hand topdressing greens until dark with Mr. Latshaw, just him and I. He called it 'feeding the chickens.' Out there, just walking and talking and tossing out handfuls of sand. That's where I really learned a lot. When I got that one-on-one time."

Not that Latshaw was playing favorites.

Stevens also remembers hydrojecting fairways that year. "I was basically hooking and unhooking a hose from quick coupler to quick coupler for 10 to 12 hours a day, by myself," he says. "That might break a lot of people, with that sound of the old water injection system, 'chek-a-chek-a-chek-a-chek...' But with bentgrass in the mid-Atlantic, we were doing everything just to get through the summer. It was brutal."

That experience and the long-lasting relationship with Latshaw that grew out of that time proved immensely beneficial. Beyond the agronomics, it also put Stevens in the orbit of some of the best practitioners in the industry.

"I was very fortunate to work with and around so many great people in the business," he says. "A lot of my friends and peers are at some of the greatest clubs in the country, Oakmont, Riviera, Inverness. And not just superintendents. I'm fortunate to have great relationships with some wonderful people who are course designers and builders and consultants and so on."

Stevens covered some impressive territory himself, including time serving as what Latshaw referred to as his "roving superintendent." In the U.S., that list of golfing terrain includes, in addition to Congressional, the likes of Baltimore Country Club, Riviera Country Club, Cherokee Town and Country Club, Card Sound Golf Club and Emerald Dunes Golf Club.

He also spent a decade in the Caribbean and Mexico, where he grew in El Camaleon, home of the PGA Tour's Mayakoba Classic. With Fairmont Hotels, he was also engaged with the Bruce Devlin and Sam Torrance Courses at Fairmont St. Andrews. Among other architects he has worked closely with include Fazio, Greg Norman and Jack Nicklaus.

He is also in a small band globally who are both a certified golf course superintendent and master greenkeeper. He serves GC-SAA's government relations mission as a Grassroots Ambassador and is also Florida Golf BMP certified. "If you're not learning something every day, it's time to hang it up," he says.

Remarkably, given all that, Stevens won't turn 50 until December. Still, he's been around long enough to sense a shift.

"Our profession can be stressful but it's also unique because, really, we're forced to use that stress and channel it into being a good thing," he says. "I think of it as a sense of urgency and always having that sense of urgency is really important. But you've got to be careful with it, for health reasons. And as I'm getting older, I'm conscious of needing to balance that sense of urgency. You want to lean on your younger guys a little more, also to make sure they are growing into the business really well."

To do that, Stevens says he has evolved. "Really, the dynamic of everything has evolved. The style of work has changed from when I came up in the industry," he says. "And you have to shift with it. Just because it was done one way 25 years ago doesn't mean that will work with the younger generation now. Sometimes you've got to take a breath, step back, and say, 'Let me think about this a little bit.'"

Stevens was called in to consult on ailing turf at Coral Creek early in 2019. A host of factors had led to an onslaught from multiple diseases to a point where even replacement turf was failing. "Every green had significant turf loss," he says. "At that point, the ownership stepped up to the plate and said, 'We've got to make some significant changes here.'"

The club hired Stevens full time and, the following year, embarked on a major renovation. In a sense, the onset of the pandemic helped. With so much fear and uncertainty over the virus at that time, the club shut down two weeks earlier than



Other than greens, Erin Stevens grassed the Tom Fazio-designed Coral Creek Club course with TifTuf from wall-to-wall.

planned, lending a little more breathing room to a tight renovation schedule.

“We decided to get after it right away,” Stevens says. “And thank God we did, because from what I understand there are so many guys in the industry now who are struggling with shortages with everything from pipe to wire and so on. So, our timing was really good.”

Greens were regrassed with TifEagle and the rest of the golf course with TifTuf. “We’ve been very happy with it,” Stevens says. “But I’m learning a year after the renovation that you’ve got to stay on top of the TifTuf because it really is aggressive. I probably edge my greens every five to six days.”

Anticipating TifTuf’s vigor, Stevens grassed every green an ad-

ditional 18 inches outside the formal green cavity. “I knew in the following years I would lose some,” he says. “Now if I do, I have 18 inches where I can put a new collar in and still not lose any of the original green size.”

The result has been a golf course that has helped fuel a resurgence at the club.

“This is a very low-key club but there’s definitely a buzz,” Stevens says. “We have a really good team in place now and I think it’s a testament to the club just how far it has come in a short period of time. When you compare how fast the latest membership growth has been with the history of the club, really, it has been phenomenal. It’s one more situation where I’ve been very blessed and am very grateful for the opportunity.” ■

- Trent Bouts

BMPs in Action

In addition to the renovation of the golf course itself, Coral Creek Club now boasts a state-of-the-art chemical building and wash pad that golf course superintendent Erin Stevens, refers to as the club’s “environmental center.” “Through discussions here with leadership and the increasing focus on best management practices, we decided we would take things to a new level,” Stevens says. “The result is a first-class, consolidated environmental center.”

The center features a stand-alone prefabricated chemical building with sprinkler system. In the event of a fire, the building automatically locks down preventing entry. Adjacent are two in-ground spill containment pads, with pumps, that equipment rolls onto. Spills and wash water are subjected to microbial breakdown which separates chemicals, fertilizers and petroleum out of the water, which is then recycled for wash use. Double-walled above-ground fuel tanks are built to be hurricane proof.

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New Committee Forms to PROMOTE ASSISTANT INTERESTS

The Florida GCSA is ramping up efforts to increase assistant superintendent engagement in the association. Significantly, the push will be spearheaded by assistants through the formation of a new assistant superintendent committee. Ten assistants from across the state have already signed on to serve on the committee.

“We are very excited about what this committee could achieve,” Florida GCSA executive director, Jennifer Bryan, says. “Assistant superintendents are the future of the profession and this association. It makes sense that we do all we can to provide them with the opportunities and services they need to succeed.”

Bryan says she has been surprised to learn that some assistants are under the mistaken impression that Florida GCSA events and services are “meant just for superintendents.”

That’s absolutely not the case,” she says. “If you are an assistant superintendent member, everything we do is as much for you as it is for a superintendent member. By the same token, we recognize that assistants might have some different needs than superintendents, and this new committee will help us identify those needs and work to satisfy them.”

Tyler Robb, assistant superintendent at The Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter, will chair the new committee. Robb joined The Loxahatchee Club early in 2020 after two years at Pipers Landing Yacht and Golf Club in Palm City. He also serves on the Treasure Coast GCSA board of directors.

Other committee members are:

Justin Allison, *The Dye Preserve Golf Club in Jupiter*
Eric Amend, *Old Memorial Golf Club in Tampa*
Tina Fry, *Copperleaf Golf Club in Bonita Springs*
A.J. (Andrea) Hill, *Mountain Lake Golf Club in Lake Wales*
Brett Jensen, *Arlington Ridge Golf Club in Arlington*
Casey Kelly, *The Palencia Club in St. Augustine*
Andy Polzin, *Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples*
Tony Price, *Hobe Sound Country Club in Hobe Sound*
John Sheridan, *Palm Beach Country Club in Palm Beach*

New Florida GCSA president, Andy Jorgensen, CGCS, from On Top of the World in Ocala, is a major supporter of the drive to increase assistant superintendent engagement.

“There is so much for these young men and women to gain from by getting involved with their state and local chapters,” Jorgensen says. “Not just for the education and information that is available at most meetings but also for the chance to establish and grow their professional networks. So many successful superintendents will tell you that their peers are big part of their success, sharing



New assistant superintendent committee chair, Tyler Robb, at The Loxahatchee Club.

ideas, suggestions and, sometimes, just an ear.”

Jorgensen says increased services for assistants will also increase the return for facilities that support that membership. “On top of that, committee members receive .25 GCSAA service points for each year they serve on the committee,” he says. “It is also a great way to introduce them to the inner workings of how the Florida GCSA operates and sets them up to move up on the local or state boards if they wish.”

Robb says the committee’s early focus will be working towards a special event for assistants in 2022, most likely in the fall. “We would like this event to be the start of an annual assistant superintendent seminar series consisting of business-related education followed by golf,” Robb says.

“This would provide a great networking event for assistants and provide information to build them for the next step in their careers. We’ve worked to make sure this committee consists of assistants hailing from all corners of the state. We have men and women involved and each member brings a unique perspective to provide valuable information and feedback to their chapter.” ■



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Tuttle Mealybug: An Emerging Pest ON BERMUDAGRASS GREENS IN FLORIDA

By Dr. Adam Dale and Todd Lowe

As if a golf course superintendent's job wasn't already interesting enough, you now have a new pest to be on the lookout for...Tuttle mealybug. Typically, a pest of zoysiagrass lawns, we now have several confirmed cases of this insect pest on bermudagrass greens in Florida.

Golf course superintendents Matt Carmeci and Kevin Ackerman were the first to bring this obscure insect to the authors' attention just two weeks apart in Melbourne and Naples, respectively. Carmeci credits Jerome Nickols, of SiteOne, for help with identification, while Ackerman was assisted by University of Florida IFAS researchers.

Signs and Symptoms: The Tuttle mealybug (*Brevinnia rehi*) is a sap-feeding insect that resembles mealybugs more commonly found on ornamental plants. Like other mealybugs, Tuttle mealybug causes yellow and brown leaf tissue and results in thin areas on putting greens (see Figure 1).

Infested areas can resemble nematode damage or take-all root rot disease, so close inspection of symptomatic turf is critical for accurate diagnosis and prevention of further damage. After initial misdiagnosis, nematicides and fungicides proved ineffective, and the stressed areas enlarged almost daily. The two superintendents mentioned previously first noticed signs of turf stress shortly after their first aerification.

Identification: Tuttle mealybugs are about the size of a medium to large sand particle, pinkish in color, and often found surrounded by white waxy secretions on turfgrass stems and leaves (see Figure 2). The white wax and pink bodies are most easily found by opening and inspecting the turf canopy or thatch layer.

Mealybugs may also be observed in clippings collecting during verticutting.

Control: Effective Tuttle mealybug management requires an integrated approach. As with most scale insect and mealybug pest species, Tuttle mealybugs are often present but not causing damage until the conditions are just right or some disturbance triggers an outbreak. Those conditions are typically related to plant stress.

These insects live in the thatch layer and evidence shows that management by verticutting can be an important component of battling this pest. Verticutting helps physically remove individual Tuttle mealybugs, which gets those pests out of the turf and reduces the number of actively feeding insects that cause damage and need to be controlled with an insecticide.

Ackerman noted some improvements to the turf occurred following light verticutting, even though the impact appeared to be short-term. Verticutting also opens the turfgrass canopy, increasing mealybug exposure to any insecticide applied to the infestation.

Knowing that initial symptoms occurred just after the first aerification in June at both locations, an aggressive verticutting at that time may help remove some of the population, expose the remaining mealybugs, and improve insecticide contact and uptake. Recommended insecticides currently include Meridian (thiamethoxam), Arena (clothianidin), and Orthene (acephate).

Systemic products like neonicotinoids are preferred because they have longer residual activity inside plant tissue where they can be ingested as the insects feed. Broad-spectrum products such



Figure 1. Initial symptoms of turf yellowing began shortly after the first aerification (left) and progressed into larger thin areas (right). Photos courtesy of Kevin Ackerman (left) and Matt Carmeci (right)



Figure 2. Tuttle mealybug size in relation to Champion bermudagrass stem, and white waxy secretion in thatch. Photos courtesy of Matt Carmeci (left) and Todd Lowe (right).

as pyrethroids and carbamates (Sevin) may initially reduce pests but are not active systemically, will not provide lasting control and will also kill predatory or parasitic insects that are helping control Tuttle mealybugs.

Combination products that contain pyrethroids and neonicotinoids (e.g. bifenthrin + imidacloprid) may provide initial high knock-down rates followed by longer systemic control, which can be a good option for dense infestations. However, more work is needed to determine the long-term effects.

Always follow label directions and restrictions when applying

these products and rotate modes of action to reduce the risk of insecticide resistance.

A final important factor in Tuttle mealybug management is time. Heavily infested turfgrass that is showing damage will take several weeks to recover from that damage. You may effectively kill most mealybugs in the area with an insecticide application, but the damage will persist for a few weeks. Don't mistake lingering damage for an active mealybug infestation.

For this reason, it is important to diagnose and manage infestations early, but also to inspect plant material for a couple of weeks after treatment to see if the mealybugs are dead. Repeat insecticide applications to damaged turf may be wasteful if the mealybugs were controlled by the initial insecticide application. In both cases, inspecting the turf for these live pink-bodied, wax-secreting bugs is critical.

An IFAS fact sheet about this insect can be found at: https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/ORN/MEALYBUG/tuttle_mealybug.htm

An IFAS turfgrass mealybug management guide can be found at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/in1166> ■

- Dr. Adam Dale is assistant professor of turfgrass and ornamental entomology at University of Florida IFAS and Todd Lowe is technical service manager at Bayer Crop Science



Figure 3. Verticutting helps physically remove individual Tuttle mealybugs.

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Zimmerman Steps Up with INTERNSHIPS FOR ALMA MATER

by Beth Bonsall*

COVID-19 has caused little disruption in daily operations at Pelican's Nest Golf Club in Bonita Springs and work has remained steady. What the pandemic did do was create a new opportunity for Jason Zimmerman, director of greens and grounds at Pelican's Nest, to welcome interns from his alma mater, Michigan State University.

MSU students rarely go to Florida during normal compressed April internships due to the seasonality, so the opportunity to host two student interns starting this January was a unique opportunity. "It's been a great benefit to have students here working who are committed to learning more," says Zimmerman, who graduated in 1998. "Learning not only about what they are doing, but why they are doing it. They proved to be very dedicated to working and were a great asset to the club."

Zimmerman says there is nothing better than applied learning in the turf industry. "One of the best things about this career is that it is constantly changing, and we continue to learn every day," he says. "To read something in a textbook or see it on a video does not take the place of getting dirty."

One of the interns, Jackson Severns has actually been working at Pelican's Nest since fall 2020. Severns found his niche with the turf concentration in the crop and soil sciences major, but he also found remote classwork challenging when classes moved online in March 2020 due to COVID-19.

"I did not do well with the online school and took some time off," he says. A faculty member at MSU helped him get a job at Pelican's Nest in September 2000. Then, for the spring 2021 semester, he became an intern at Pelican's Nest at the same time he took online turf classes directly applicable to his internship.

Severns wants to be a superintendent or assistant superintendent at a golf course after he graduates. His internship provided unique opportunities for him to interact with industry leaders, as well as learn applicable skills on the golf course. "It's nice to go to class, and then you go to work to learn more about pesticides, fertilizers, procedures, protocols, fungicides. Then you're working right with the spray technicians at the golf course," he says.

The internships at Pelican's Nest were part of a new internship program that ran from January to March 2021. Afterwards, for their April to May internships, students had the option of staying at their locations or moving on to a different golf facility. Of the 16 students who participated in the new internship program, 12



Jason Zimmerman



Intern Jackson Severns outside Pelican's Nest Golf Club in Bonita Springs.

went to different golf facilities to gain additional experience.

Presented with the unique challenges caused by COVID-19, Professor John "Trey" Rogers III had the idea of finding turf-grass internships outside of Michigan during the spring semester starting in January 2021. With MSU classes continuing in remote formats, he saw this as a way for students to learn on site at actual golf facilities while also taking online courses.

Rogers knew the facilities who had the resources to accommodate students, as well as the willingness to experiment with MSU. Many of his industry connections are also MSU turf alumni who understand the value of in-person learning experiences.

"We needed nine golf facilities, and I made nine phone calls," Rogers says. "I wasn't giving them much time to react to this. All these superintendents said they'd take as many students as we wanted to send their way."

Typically, MSU coordinates compressed internships for students starting April 1, but having the students start in January, or in some cases even earlier, helped golf facilities this year as business in many states has been booming. Golf has been viewed as a safe outdoor activity people could participate in while social distancing, so demand has been strong throughout the pandemic.

"We bit off a lot here, but the alternative was these students were sitting behind a computer all semester and not using their turf skills in the field," Rogers says. "From what I've heard from the students, they're overwhelmingly supportive of the work and experience they're getting. Now it's thinking about how to work out some of the kinks." ■

**This report is condensed from a longer article written by Beth Bonsall from MSU communications and marketing department.*

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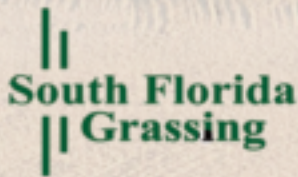
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Sometimes it's the only way to do what's best for the turf.

Post-Summer Tips FOR A GREAT SEASON

by Kyle Sweet, CGCS

I don't know about you, but it feels like the summers keep getting shorter and shorter. I remember a time when the first aerification was a day or two after Mother's Day and when October was still considered the summer.

Well, no matter what they tell me, I know it's true, October is no longer summer in South Florida. More and more people are living here year-round, or at least more of the year. And they want to play so we need to be ready sooner.

Let's really put this short summer into perspective. We aerify in June, do all the work that it takes to have a successful summer and start putting the course together by October.

I'm no genius, but I think I've figured out that it gives me four months to prep yet the heat in Florida lasts at least six months the last time I checked! Yep, sweating in May and still sweating October, feels like six months to me.

So, the heat is on in more ways than one. The heat is on to be ready, while the heat is still on outside. I'm sure that many of you are in the same boat and are doing a great job making it happen year after year. You are superintendents, that's what you do!

As the short and busy summer comes to a close, I get very anxious, and, you might say, just a little hyped as we prepare for the season. I want everything to be perfect. I want to fix any wrongs

from last season. I want my staff looking sharp and well trained and the greens to be the best ever and the mowing lines to be just right and the bunkers to be perfect and...and...and...ugh!

So, I figured I'd take all this nervous energy and put together my list of tips for a great season. Take 'em or leave 'em, there might just be a good one for you.

Wax your stimpy! Heck, it can't hurt. Green speed isn't all we're judged on but it sure is a number that armchair superintendents and wanna be golfers like to toss around. I mean, the thing was invented to test consistency back when the green speeds were equivalent to the speed of my tee tops today, and now it's used to measure my job performance. Heck, if I can get a little extra roll and keep some grass on the greens then I'm all about it. Liquid or paste wax will be just fine and applying weekly will do the trick.

Green Tees Please! I can't get the golfers to pick up their white "reusable" tees and if you haven't noticed we're kinda busy in the mornings, so I recommend color matching your turf and have the golf shop order up green tees this season. Just leave them laying around wherever, no one will care if they can't see them. Don't splash any fancy logo on there, just make them jumbo and green and forget stooping around after someone else this season.

Ballwasher Popourri! Say goodbye to stinky ball washers with some good old-fashioned potpourri. The Dollar Store has buckets

of this stuff and it'll keep those ball washers smelling like a spring meadow all season long. What says classy and a great course more than a great scent when washing those beloved muddy golf balls.

8:30am First Tee times! Yep, you really want to have an awesome season, let's push back that first tee time to 8:30 and let us get some work done. Why not, the golf shop sets up bags the night before play, the F&B stages all the tables the night before morning service and often the tennis courts are groomed the night before. So, let's give golf course maintenance a little time to get out there and get the job done...8:30am first tee times forever!

Crew Out by Noon! With the overabundance of applicants these days, I'm sure you can pull this one off. How about hiring 30 percent more people and have them work 25 percent less hours. The biggest waste of time is working around and avoiding golfers, agreed? Have 24 workers work six hours and leave by noon instead of 18 workers for eight hours. You're ahead of the golfers, the job is getting done and you've got all the afternoon to do the things that you need to do. Sorry assistants, this probably won't apply to you.

Golf Course Signage! Get creative and honest with signage. How about "Keep Off the Grass." I think that's a pretty effective message and no one can argue that keeping off the grass is truly the best thing for it. Year after year, I'm asked why the fairway on the fourth hole is so great. Probably like your par 3s, it just happens to be the one where golfers must stay on the path and your staff

probably does too, if you are lucky.

Solid Human Resource Policies! Three words, ice cream cake. You see, these things don't have to be complicated. I'm convinced that you can't frown when eating ice cream so slap a couple names of staff that are celebrating a birthday that month on an ice cream cake and wheel that thing out before the midday meeting. You'll really be a hero on a hot day, and it might just be the only cake that they get to celebrate their day.

Lastly and most importantly...

Keep Your Sense of Humor! I like to think that this is a pretty special thing that we do. We do it for people that spend a lot of money burning three or four hours a day to frustrate themselves and that, in itself, in today's busy world, should put it into perspective. Smile often, take care of yourself, enjoy your family, enjoy your friends and enjoy this crazy good business.

Seriously, have a great season. Florida is booming and let's hope that this population and economic boom pays dividends to the game of golf and our maintenance operations all around the state. I hope to hear from more and more friends on their continued successes for the 2021 – 2022 season.

Make it the best ever! ■

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



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The First Decade of the Florida GCSA

by Mark Jarrell

Through the efforts of many dedicated superintendents and industry partners, the Florida GCSA quickly grew into the most powerful and influential GCSAA chapter following its reorganization in 1980. Tim Hiers served as the Florida GCSA's first president, wisely chosen by certain strong leaders like Bill Wagner, Paul Turcotte, Clint Smallridge, Tom Burrows and others, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to give birth to this baby.

Tim Hiers recalls those formative years: "I drove from Suntree Country Club in probably late 1979 to make a pitch for the West Coast chapter to join and support the proposed Florida GCSA.

There were 110 in attendance that day and they came loaded for bear.

"After giving my impassioned plea, they decided to take a vote. The looks in the room were so austere my shirt and jacket were drenched in sweat! The body language and looks were not friendly, but prior to the vote, Harvey Phillips and Fred Tucker stood up and supported the idea.

"The vote was 107 to three in favor of joining and supporting the new state chapter. Had Harvey and Fred not spoken up I feel certain the vote would have been something like 90 against and 20 for."

Tim also mentions a humbling experience which occurred before that fateful meeting, probably at a Florida Turfgrass Association conference in Orlando in 1977 or 1978:

"Bill Wagner and about seven other prominent superintendents surrounded me and asked if I would consider becoming the first president of the Florida GCSA. My first thought was, 'Finally, someone has recognized all the hard work I've done. Clint Smallridge, in his immutable way stated, 'We chose you because nobody knows you.' After getting over the shock of that statement, he went on to explain that 'We have to pick someone nobody knows so as to avoid jealousy from other chapters.' That made sense and I accepted their proposal."

Even today's youngest members of the Florida GCSA know of Tim Hiers and his inimitable career. So, credit those pioneers who saw in Tim the kind of leader and peerless ambassador for our profession that he became.

Florida had more golf courses than any other state, but few Florida superintendents were able to serve on the GCSAA board, or even on committees, mainly because of time constraints. While superintendents in other areas of the country worked long and hard hours during the growing season, most had some downtime in the winter. Florida superintendents never have a slow time – winter is the busy golfing season and summers are busy



*The first Florida GCSA president, Tim Hiers, left, with Dan Jones, who edited *The Florida Green* for 14 years, starting when he was at Turnberry Isles and through many years at Banyan Golf Club.*

doing construction, renovations, and heavy maintenance.

After the reorganization of the Florida GCSA, John Hayden of San Jose Country Club in Jacksonville became the first Florida superintendent to serve on the GCSAA board of directors.

Over the early years of the Florida GCSA's growth and ascendancy, several initiatives were critical components. First and foremost was the development of the award-winning magazine *The Florida Green*. The magazine began as the newsletter of the South Florida chapter and was called *The South Florida Green*. Lou Oxnevad was its first editor and Dan Jones took over while he was in south Florida at Turnberry Isles.

Dan served as editor for three years before moving up to Banyan Golf Club in Palm Beach County at about the same time as the reorganization of the Florida GCSA. The South Florida chapter wisely saw the benefit of allowing their magazine to morph into the state publication you are reading today.

In the days before computers Dan and his wife, Irene, produced the magazine for 14 years using cut-and-paste methods for photos. Superintendents were encouraged to write articles, and many answered the call. Without a doubt, what set *The Florida Green* apart from other excellent chapter newsletters and magazines around the country was the superb fold-out covers by photographers David Bailey and Dan Zelazek.

David was a superintendent at some of the finest clubs in south Florida throughout his career while Dan was a professional photographer who used a large format Dierdorff camera, yielding the high-resolution images unmatched by any other chapter newsletter. David and Dan would travel wherever necessary around the state and often scouted the locations over two or three days to determine the best angle, lighting, and time of day to produce incredible cover photos.

The Florida Green was published on a quarterly basis except for a brief period in the early '90s when we went with six issues a year. When Tom Burrows was president of the Florida GCSA, he proposed a smaller, bi-monthly, four-page newsletter to provide more timely industry information, as much of the information in The Florida Green was outdated by the time it got into a superintendent's hands.

Mike Bailey came up with The Greensheet when he was superintendent at Boca Greens Country Club and single-handedly produced it for almost 15 years, which included his tenure at The Falls Country Club. He attended all Florida GCSA board meetings and many local chapter meetings and industry events to report relevant information. Mike also developed and distributed, with Marie Roberts' help, the questions for an annual budget survey. It was mailed to all Class A members and proved to be a valuable tool for superintendents.

One of the first steps taken to mold the Florida GCSA into an influential GCSAA chapter was to ask Florida superintendents to assign their votes to our state chapter, which required signing an affidavit. It took the efforts of many throughout the state, and it was overwhelmingly embraced by all but a few.

Some of us carried blank affidavits in our vehicles, which led to at least one amusing incident. Kevin Downing and I ran into a fellow GCSAA member at a local watering hole who was a bit inebriated. We explained what we were doing but literally had to place the affidavit in front of him and put the pen in his hand to



At a Florida Turfgrass Association conference in the mid-'80s, from left, Stanley Carr, Dick Blake, (GCSAA president 1971 and Florida GCSA president 1987-88), John Foy, longtime USGA agronomist for the Southeast Region, and unknown.

get his signature.

If memory serves me, when I became a superintendent in 1973, there were only three superintendent chapters in the state - the South Florida, West Coast, and Everglades. Due to the travel distances, the only education and networking available to most superintendents then was through the Florida Turfgrass Association's annual conference and show and, for those that could afford travel expenses to Atlanta, the annual USGA conference.

The late '70s through the '80s saw the formation of various chapters and transitions that led to our current status of 11 chapters and an At-Large membership category. I was a charter member of the Central Florida GCSA, which formed in 1978, and then became a charter member of the Palm Beach GCSA in 1980 when it transitioned from the Tri-County GCSA, which had also been formed in 1978.

The Treasure Coast GCSA was also born at this time claiming the two northern counties, Martin and St. Lucie, from the short-lived Tri-County group. Florida was experiencing a golf course building boom and superintendents were quick to make practical adjustments and create new chapters to better serve their educational and networking needs.

It wasn't long before the Florida GCSA had the largest voting block in GCSAA elections, and those running for office and their supporting chapters began courting our votes. We were still in our infancy and had limited funds, so those first few GCSAA conventions were austere.

The Florida GCSA paid for a suite at the headquarters hotel for its president and it was to serve as a meeting place for hosting candidates to meet and discuss their agendas. At the convention



Bill Wagner was superintendent at Tequesta Country Club for 23 years and one of the leaders of the reorganization of the Florida GCSAA. Sadly, Bill left us in 1988 after a 10-year struggle with cancer. He quietly and privately endured many painful treatments (note his misshapen jaw), only sharing with close friend Tom Burrows that the lesions on his head were literally chipped off with a hammer and chisel, and nothing could be done to mitigate the pain. Bill was the first recipient of the Florida GCSA Distinguished Service Award.



Mike Bailey when he was superintendent at Boca Rio Golf Club.



Marsh Benson when he was superintendent at The Country Club of Florida in Boynton Beach before moving on to fame and fortune at Augusta National Golf Club.



David Bailey, pictured in 1991, helped produce some of the outstanding fold out covers in the magazine.

in Phoenix, AZ, we couldn't afford the hotel liquor and mixer prices, so I had to walk two blocks to a local liquor store and sneak a few bottles back up to our room to accommodate our guests.

It was but a few years later that the annual Florida GCSA reception became the huge event it remains to this day, thanks in large part to Paul Crawford working his magic to obtain financial support from our industry partners.

In 1983, royal blue blazers were adopted as our official chapter jacket to increase our visibility and identification at industry functions. We also purchased a booth which secretary (later association manager) Marie Roberts set up at various venues where copies of *The Florida Green* and other educational materials were made available for distribution.

Various superintendents also manned the booth, not only to give Marie a break, but to answer job-related questions that she couldn't. We also purchased a slide viewer which gave a narrative of the job of a superintendent and displayed photos of Florida superintendents performing a variety of routine maintenance, renovation, and construction activities.

Anyone in today's high-tech world would laugh if they had seen Kevin Downing and I recording the narrative for each slide, timing it on a watch, while playing the background music on a stereo in our living room. Computers were just coming into use in our profession in the early '80s and few practical software programs were available. Mobile phones became available in the mid-'80s but most superintendents didn't have them until the early '90s.

The first decade after the Florida GCSA's reorganization was a lively and busy time. Thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of many superintendents, a solid framework was developed to provide us with knowledge to become better at our jobs and better stewards of the environment.

This period saw the Florida GCSA create several new funding

mechanisms to raise money for research projects, with credit due to our industry suppliers who also saw the necessity of solid ammunition to counter the overzealous environmental activists. Critical information and research data were soon generated to help us develop new methods, practices, and strategies to do our jobs more efficiently and eco-friendly.

We soon learned that things weren't so simple – the environmental movement spawned by Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" proved to be a formidable obstacle to our honest efforts to get to the truth of our industry's practices. While we welcomed the information generated by our research and considered it unvarnished truth, many environmental groups called it "tainted" because it was "funded by industry."

Most of the projects were funneled through the Florida Turfgrass Association, since the mechanisms were already in place, plus we wanted other turfgrass-based industries to become active and get involved. Our first 10 years or so also saw the founding of the South Florida Turfgrass Field Day and Expo. This annual event started in 1988 and allowed superintendents and other turfgrass professionals to gather at the Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center to get research updates and see some of the field projects firsthand.

The Florida GCSA paid for the building of a USGA specification green so real-world conditions could be simulated, and relevant experiments conducted, and we also funded a technician to care for the green, plus provided the equipment needed to maintain it.

The first decade of the Florida GCSA was quite extraordinary, laying the foundation for what is still the greatest and most accomplished GCSAA chapter in the country. Many of the early movers and shakers have retired or have passed from this life – I hope they are not forgotten. ■

- Mark Jarrell wrote this article in collaboration with David Bailey, Mike Bailey, Kevin Downing, CGCS and Tim Hiers, CGCS



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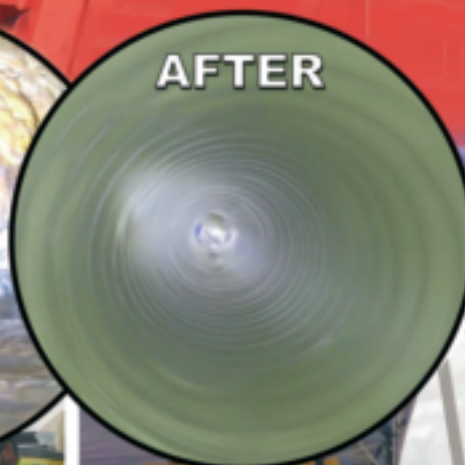
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Native Plantings at Heart Of Environmental Award

Innovative sustainability measures at TPC Sawgrass, in Ponte Vedra Beach, have been recognized by GCSAA and Golf Digest in partnership with Syngenta by naming Jeff Plotts, director of golf course operations, among the 2021 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards.

Plotts received the Innovative Conservation Award, which recognizes unique and innovative strategies for conservation based on Best Management Practices. He was one of four people selected internationally. Other awards were given for natural resource conservation, healthy land stewardship and communications and outreach.

"This award is more about our team and their commitment to our natural environment than it is about me," Plotts says. "I am just a small part of this initiative. I feel blessed and proud to represent our team's effort and success."

A member of TPC Sawgrass since 2015, Plotts and his staff do an incredible amount of planning to ensure the property not only is beautiful year-round - and for THE PLAYERS Championship - but that it's also sustainable. Flowers have played a big role in aesthetic value of the landscape during THE PLAYERS Championship and by developing a wildflower initiative with native seeds, Plotts and his staff have been able to grow large amounts of flowers that are used throughout the property.

While annual flowers would be changed out seasonally, native wildflowers require fewer inputs and can be maintained through multiple seasons or years - equating to \$75,000 a year in savings, which is now used for ongoing reforestation.

"Our goal was to use the native plant palette of our region and surroundings to highlight and enhance our golf courses," Plotts says. "Two of the more prominent wildflowers that we use are Dune Sunflower and Gaillardia which are commonly seen on sand dunes and native areas throughout our community."

"We felt that as successful and hardy as these plants were, that they may be a good addition to our landscape. We started with a few plants and have continued to harvest seed from these plants to propagate, grow and expand."

In all, more than 1,500 trees have been planted at



Jeff Plotts

TPC Sawgrass in the last three years as part of the reforestation project. Like the wildflowers, the tree species are native to the area and include oak, pine and magnolia. The success of the wildflowers has also resulted in the planting of native grass species to accompany the wildflower plantings.

"It's our ambition to be a little more sustainable each and every day," Plotts says. "We are the stewards of a living and ever-changing environment; we need to do our part to protect it. Small steps can have long term gains using the three R's rule of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle."

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New Role for Stevens At BallenIsles CC

BallenIsles Country Club in Palm Beach Gardens, recently welcomed Mike Stevens as the new director of agronomy. Stevens will oversee maintenance of BallenIsles' three championship golf courses, including the East, North and South courses, its golf practice facilities and the club's agronomy team.

Born and raised in Gainesville, Stevens has lived the past 21 years in and around St. Augustine. He most recently served as the Southeast director of agronomic programs for Indigo Golf Partners, a division of Troon, overseeing golf course maintenance, capital planning, renovations, and staff development in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana and Texas. From 2007 to 2010, he served as superintendent of St. John's Golf and Country Club in St. Augustine.



Mike Stevens

"The team is very excited to attract a talent like Michael," BallenIsles CC general manager and COO Ryan Walls said. "We certainly look forward to continuing an upward trajectory of agronomic excellence. Michael's experience will also be invaluable as we continue to execute on our strategic vision for our future

sport offerings here at the club."

Stevens is a North Florida GCSA past-president and former Florida GCSA board member. He is married to childhood sweetheart, Amanda, and has two children, Benjamin and Madison.

"After serving in a regional capacity and working with so many great clubs, I really look forward to settling down and honing my skills on one property," Stevens says. "The quality, expectation and lofty goals BallenIsles has is so evident. I very much welcome the opportunity for our team to put the agronomic conditioning atop the great clubs in Florida."

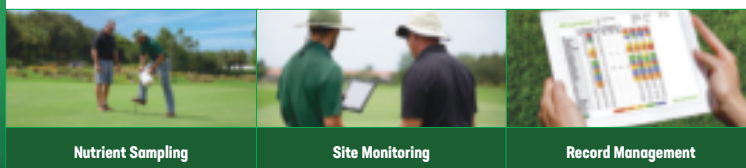
Earlier this year, BallenIsles announced a strategic design partnership with Nicklaus Design to take the club through a multi-year renovation of the East course and golf practice facilities. The renovation is expected to include a modernization of the irrigation system, a complete re-grassing of the course, improvement of tee locations and the return of original course design features from when the course hosted major championships.

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Bayer Welcomes Adam Ellison

Bayer's turf and ornamentals business has tapped veteran golf course superintendent, Adam Ellison, to serve as area sales manager in central Florida. Ellison brings more than 10 years of experience as a golf course superintendent to this role. He is responsible for managing customer and distributor relationships in the golf and lawn and landscape sectors.



Adam Ellison

"A long-time superintendent, Adam is an excellent addition to the Bayer Turf and Ornamentals team," says Mike Ruizzo, southern region manager for U.S. turf and ornamentals. "He fully understands the quality service and products that superintendents and lawn-care operators need to achieve their best. We are excited for our customers to see his knowledge and passion."

Ellison most recently served as a Class A golf course superintendent at Grasslands Golf and Country Club in Lakeland. He has also worked at various other golf clubs in Florida during his career. He holds a bachelor's degree in horticulture from Eastern Kentucky University and is an Eagle Scout. He lives in Lakeland with his wife and daughters and enjoys spending time with his family, travelling and outdoor activities.

Late News

The Florida GCSA congratulates Seth Strickland, above, from Miami Shores Golf Club on winning his fourth GCSAA National Golf Championship as this magazine went to print. Strickland shot a one-under par total of 143 to win the 36-hole event in Palm Springs, CA by four strokes. Four Florida GCSA members finished in the top 10.



GCSAA Scholarship Awarded to Robinson

Kendall Robinson, daughter of David Robinson, CGCS from Marriott Golf in Orlando, is one of 20 winners of GCSAA Legacy Scholarships this year. The awards are based on academic achievement, community involvement, extracurricular activities and leadership skills. Applicants must be enrolled full time at an accredited institution of higher learning, or for high school seniors, accepted at such an institution for the next academic year. Kendall is a student at the University of Florida.

To be eligible, applicants must be a child or grandchild of a GCSAA member. The program is funded by GCSAA's philanthropic organization, the GCSAA Foundation, and supported by Syngenta. Each grant is for \$1,500.

"Beyond serving GCSAA's members in their profession, we're proud to extend our reach to their families by supporting their academic pursuits," GCSAA chief executive officer Rhett Evans says. "The Legacy Awards help relieve some of the financial burden of higher education costs for our members' families, thanks to the partnership of the GCSAA Foundation and Syngenta."

"Syngenta is dedicated to providing higher education via the Legacy Awards to further support GCSAA members and their families," says Stephanie Schwenke, turf marketing manager for Syngenta. "Providing scholarships for students and grandchildren of association members is one way we can express our gratitude for the vital role superintendents play in sustaining the golf industry."

Olde Cypress Reopens Soon with New Look

The Club at Olde Cypress, in Naples will reopen its remastered P.B. Dye-designed golf course and 34,000-square-foot updated clubhouse in November following a multi-million-dollar investment in the club by owner STOCK Development. Director of golf course maintenance Brad Haynes was integral to the extensive project.

The scope of work entailed resurfacing all 18 greens, practice green and chipping area with TifEagle bermudagrass; enlarging, leveling and regrassing tee boxes with Bimini bermudagrass; installation of a new subsurface drainage system and new high-performance, artificial turf stations on the driving range for use when the grass tees are closed. To complete the project, the course's 98 bunkers will be refreshed with new edging, contouring and sand.

"Golf's popularity has soared over the past 18 months and now our course is fully-updated and ready to accommodate our golf members, who are among the most avid players in the Naples market," Olde Cypress director of golf, Joe Conforti, says. "Director of Golf Course Maintenance Brad Haynes and his team have been instrumental in restoring our outstanding P.B. Dye design to its original grandeur."

Legacy Scholarship Comes to Florida

Kendall Robinson, daughter of David Robinson, CGCS from Marriott Golf in Orlando, is one of 20 winners of GCSAA Legacy Scholarships this year. The awards are based on academic achievement, community involvement, extracurricular activities and leadership skills. Applicants must be enrolled full time at an accredited institution of higher learning, or for high school seniors, accepted at such an institution for the next academic year. Robinson is a student at the University of Florida.

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Jeffrey Promoted At Lone Palm

Aaron Jeffery has been promoted to golf course superintendent at Lone Palm Golf Club in Lakeland. Jeffrey started his career at Lone Palm in 2004 and served as assistant golf course superintendent for more than five years. In this time, he has earned an advanced certificate in turfgrass science from Penn State. He and his wife, Beth, have two children, Maggie, 7, and Noah, 2.

Lone Palm general manager Wayne Raath says Jeffrey is stepping into the role previously occupied by Mike Caudill, who has "stepped to a lesser role, focusing on special projects and landscape, and spending time caring for his mother."

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Welcome New Members

The Florida GCSA welcomes the following new and returning members to the association:

Juan Barragan, *OnCore Group*, Class A

Will Bendy, *Olde Florida Golf Club*, Class C

John Clifton, *Oceanside Country Club*, Class B

Steve Connally, *Diamond R Fertilizer*, Affiliate

Mariano Corral, *Mariano Corral Landscape*, Affiliate

Brian Cottrell, *Stoneybrook Golf Club*, Class C

John Crocker, *Swiss Golf Course*, Class B

Dan DaCosta, *Davco Turf*, Affiliate

Mike Dague, *Winter Park Golf Course*, Class C

Bill Davis, *Wyndemere Country Club*, Class B

Nicole Davis, *Tri-State Pump and Control*, Affiliate

Corey Edwards, *Lake Nona Golf & Country Club*, Class C

Miguel Escobar, *ACI - The Colony*, Class C

Anthony Ferrari, *Watershed Geo*, Affiliate

William Galbraith, *Rocky Point*, Class B

Alexander Hale, *Sawgrass Country Club*, Class C

Chad Hayen, *Trigon Turf Services*, Affiliate

Jay Haft, *Wyndemere Country Club*, Class C

A.J. Hill, *Mountain Lake Corporation*, Class C

J. J. Lake, J. W., *Marriott Marco Island*, Class B

John Madden, *Noble Turf*, Affiliate

Alisa Mirts, *Florida Golf Materials*, Affiliate

Jeremy Nipper, *Everglades Farm Equipment*, Affiliate

Michael Sidlovsky, *Aqua-Matic Irrigation Systems*, Affiliate

Jason Stalvey, *Old Palm Golf Club*, Class C

Adam Stewart, *Down 2 Earth*, Class B

Sean Swor, *Bobcat of the Treasure Coast*, Affiliate

Tom Taylor, *PGA Golf Club*, Class A

Gary Terwilliger, *Hedge Toppers*, Affiliate



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BMP – Our Three-Letter Recipe for Future Success

This edition's message serves as a call to action for all our golf facilities in Florida to work toward completing a Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual specific to your facility. The heavy lifting is done, as Dr. Bryan Unruh and his team from the University of Florida have worked in tandem with the Florida GCSA education committee to produce a statewide BMP manual that resides in the GCSAA BMP template.

With three or four clicks within the template, superintendents can clone the state manual, put their signature hole or logo on the cover and have their own facility Best Management Practices Manual. It is simple to accomplish this much but if you want to take the time and modify the state BMPs to fit your specific site, a little more effort is required but again the hard part is already accomplished.

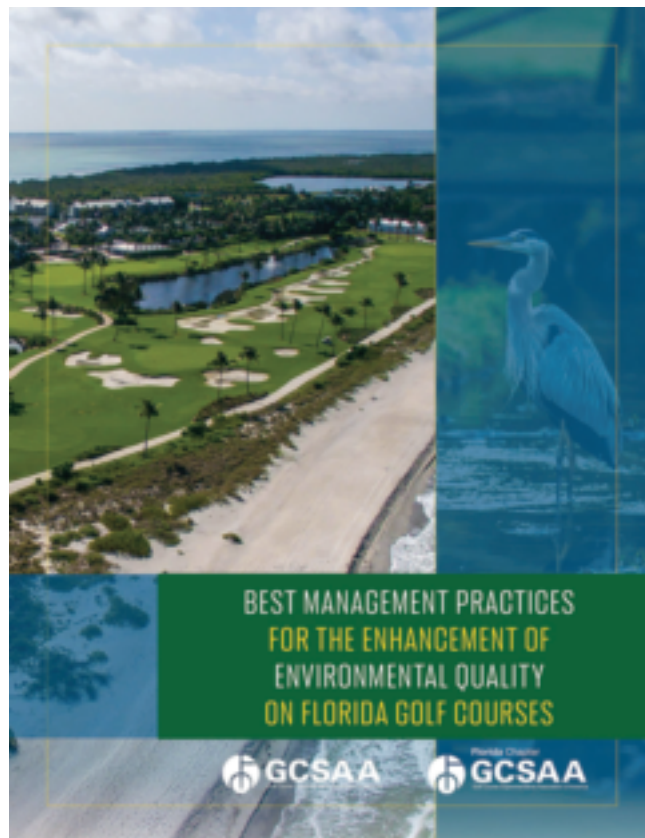
You may be asking yourself, "Why is this important and how will it benefit me?" The answer is clear. In Florida we are faced with more than 110 local fertilizer ordinances and our current BMPs and certification program have served us well to this point in keeping golf courses excused from the majority of the local fertilizer ordinances.

Lately, however, golf has had to fight harder than ever to allow superintendents to continue to use fertilizers during restrictive blackout periods. There would be serious consequences if we were to lose existing exemptions and fail to gain new ones.

Just ask any superintendents in the Miami-Dade area. Recently, it looked as though golf would be included in the blackout and setback mandates for the county. Through the efforts of local superintendents, the Florida GCSA and The Southern Group, golf courses that are certified with BMPs are allowed to fertilize without interference from blackouts or setbacks.

As we continue to navigate these challenges, it is increasingly evident that we need to take the next step and have documentation at each facility, clearly demonstrating that we adhere to BMPs as established in our state. The current BMP Manual is updated from the 2007 edition and takes into account the advancements over the past 14 years. Through a combination of creating your own facility BMP Manual and completing the Florida BMP Certification Program, we will be better positioned to take on the challenges presented by onerous legislation.

Golf course superintendents are professionally trained land managers that provide valuable green spaces in many urban environments. Proper understanding and utilization of the tools at our disposal allow us to maintain golf courses in a



manner that is acceptable to our golfers, and at the same time provide wildlife and pollinator habitat, cool the environment and reduce stormwater impacts.

We need to have the documentation of our efforts to ensure we can continue to provide these playing conditions and habitats. There is no better way to advocate for the golf industry than to have BMP documentation in place that will help bolster our status as environmental stewards.

GCSAA declared a goal for all 50 states to have BMPs in place by 2020. I am proud to say we accomplished that goal, and we are now moving on to the next stage of our plan. We want to see as many facilities as possible adopt site specific BMP manuals.

I am here to help any superintendent that wants to create their own manual. Times have changed drastically in my 30-plus years here in Florida, and it is imperative that we are proactive in our approach to the obstacles placed in our way. Please take the time to tailor the Florida BMPs for your facility. ■

- Ralph Dain is GCSAA's regional representative in Florida

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– Mike Dachowski, Superintendent



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