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# The FLORIDA Green



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**ON THE COVER:**  
Seth Strickland is nearing 20 years at Miami Shores Country Club and still marvels at the miracle life golf has given him.

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# COVID-19 Came, We Saw, And, Man, We Conquered

Well, this definitely has been an extraordinary year or so. I can tell we are back to normal when conversations with peers have returned to grumbling about the weather instead of COVID. How much rain did you get yesterday?

As much as this past year has tried to separate, isolate and keep us down; in many ways the reverse has been true. In many circles, communication has picked up. Outdoor activities have skyrocketed. And I heard time and again how there was a period when families were spending more time together. All of which should ultimately make us healthier and happier as human beings.



Andy Neiswender

Then there's the fact that the past year has been great for golf. It is especially heartening to see the smaller clubs doing well. Our industry has endured some tough times in the first two decades of this century and things got really tight for some facilities. But now we see many making a few improvements to their courses or finally, after years of putting it off, having the resources to secure some much-needed equipment.

I would bet if you polled superintendents, they would tell you they don't like change and that they don't handle it well. I've been a superintendent or assistant superintendent for over 30 years. Naturally, over that time I've seen a lot of short-term challenges brought on by weather, construction projects or even career moves that have delivered change. But never had I experienced anything so protracted, complicated and disruptive to our worlds as COVID.

As superintendents, we had to introduce cleaning protocols, we negotiated staffing challenges due to sickness, we coached crew members through their fear and uncertainty. And we did all of that in a tight labor market, with interruptions to delivery of products and equipment, all while our golf courses were snowed under extremely high levels of play.

Yet, individually, and collectively as a group, we nailed it!

We got the job done, serving not only our facilities but also our communities. There is no doubt that being able to get out on the golf course for a few hours relieved a lot of stress and anxiety for a lot of people. All that extra effort and adaptation we went through didn't touch the virus, but it definitely made life more enjoyable for others when many needed it the most. And that is something to be proud of.

So, yeah, we don't like change and we may doubt how well we handle it, but I'd say the proof is clear in golf's success over the past year. The truth is, we excel at it!

Although my term has been different than what I envisioned, the nature of the past year and the performance of our members has only added to the sense of honor and privilege I feel in representing you as Florida GCSA president. Our association is in great hands from executive director, Jennifer Bryan, and the dedicated superintendents who serve on the executive committee and board of directors. ■

- Andy Neiswender, Belleair Country Club



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## Days Can Be Long But The Years Can Fly By

Each year, I am increasingly aware at how fast time travels. It is hard to believe that we are in the thick of summer and the "season" will be here before we know it. Sometimes the days can be long, but the years really do fly by.

I am sure you have all received your membership renewal invoices and your first thought was, "Didn't I just turn this in?" It feels like it, but I can assure you, it is just time playing its tricks and it was really a full year ago.

If you have not done so already, please be sure to get those renewals in. Our membership year runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. If you are not currently a member, now is the time to join.

My goal each year is to produce a Membership Directory that lists ALL of our members. There is nothing more disappointing than getting a membership application or renewal the day after I have submitted my final member list to the printer. I wish it was an easy process and I could submit names right up to press time, but production of the directory is anything but simple. It takes about two months once all the ads and data are submitted until it is printed and mailed, so submitting your renewal forms in a timely manner really is important.

Another example of time moving quickly - our inaugural Golf BMP Certification Class of 2012 has now had to renew their certification for the second time. Which means those of you who were certified or renewed certification in 2017 are now due for recertification this year as the Golf BMP Certification is good for four years. Once the four-year milestone is reached you will need to renew your certification.

The University of Florida is now overseeing this program. The entire program is now available on-line ([floridagcsa.com/page/GolfBMPPProgram](http://floridagcsa.com/page/GolfBMPPProgram)) and once registered, you have 30 days to complete the program. Maintaining your certification is important for you, our association and our industry's reputation amongst

decision-makers, so please make it a priority.

And now, perfect timing... The Southern Group has been busy lobbying on behalf for our industry. We were able to successfully remain exempt from fertilizer blackout dates in Miami-Dade County and we will continue to monitor other ordinances across the state. As we do this, the Golf BMP Certification Program comes front and center and the importance placed on our members to maintain and become certified increases.

If we could go to Tallahassee for Florida Turf Day or Florida Golf Day and announce that 100 percent of our members are certified, well, that would be our time to shine. I know we can do it and it would be all the more powerful if we were to achieve this goal before such a standard becomes mandatory. I hope you will do your part to help us reach that goal.

As I write, we are getting ready to host our 25th Annual Florida GCSA Steven Wright Memorial Golf Tournament. This is a great way to get superintendents from all over the state in one location for camaraderie, education and friendly competition. We were excited to see everyone in person again. If you didn't make it this year, I promise, before you know it, it will be here again. Time has a funny way of doing that. ■

- Jennifer Bryan, Executive Director

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## William "Bill" Barkley

William "Bill" Barkley, who served as head professional and golf course superintendent at the Naval Air Station Golf Course in Pensacola from 1958 to 1971, died July 8, aged 89. Barkley played on the University of Florida golf team and later played in a number of PGA Tour events.

Later, he owned and operated two public driving ranges, a golf school; as well as owned and operated Rivermont Golf and Country Club in Johns Creek, GA from 1972 to 1987. Nearing retirement, he appeared on the Golf Channel, in Travel & Leisure Golf, on the pages of Senior Golfer and was a golf columnist for USA Today.

## William "Bill" Cash

William "Bill" Cash, equipment manager at Belleair Country Club in Belleair, lost his battle with colon cancer in July. He spent more than 20 years in the Florida West Coast chapter area.

Cash started his turf career at Gainesville Country Club as an assistant technician in the late '90s. He moved to the Florida West Coast chapter area to work as Tony Disano's equipment manager at Lake Jovita Golf and Country Club in the early 2000s. He then moved to Old Memorial Golf Club with Trent Inman for several years before traveling to the Bahamas to work at Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Course. He spent the last nine years with Andy Neiswender at Belleair Country Club.

Cash spent several years with the West Tech EM association including serving as its president. He also served on the Florida West Coast GCSA board and on the Florida GCSA education committee.

"What made Bill a great golf course equipment manager was that he cared more about the quality of the surfaces and less about what would happen to his mowers," Neiswender says. "It was not uncommon for him to tell me I wasn't topdressing enough."

Throughout his career he has helped groom several technicians to hone their skills and help them to move on to run their own shop as equipment managers. He will be truly missed by us all."

Cash leaves behind his wife, Lesa, her children and grandchildren and his sister Melissa.

## John "Ken" Shakeshaft

John "Ken" Shakeshaft, golf course superintendent at Six Lakes Country Club in North Fort Myers for the past 27 years and a past winner of the Florida GCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service, died May 29.

As a child, Shakeshaft arrived in Port Charlotte in 1958 when it was a sleepy retirement community without a golf course. Still, there was golf in his genes. His grandfather spent 35 years as greenkeeper at Century Country Club in Westchester, NY and an uncle, Dick Shakeshaft, was golf course superintendent at Punta Gorda Country Club for 17 years.

It was for his uncle at Punta Gorda that Shakeshaft first worked in golf out of high school in the summer before attending Edison Community College. In 1974, he started full time for his uncle and in the fall of 1975, he entered what was then Lake City Community College's golf and landscape operations program.

Out of school, Shakeshaft became golf course superintendent at The Hills Course in Rotunda West. In 1986, he moved to Sun Aire Golf Club in Haines City. He started at Six Lake in North Ft. Myers in 1993. In addition to golf course maintenance, he was responsible for lawn maintenance for nearly 600 home sites, common area landscape, trash removal and some residential utility work.

Shakeshaft served on the Calusa GCSA board of directors and was previously a member of the Central Florida, Ridge and Everglades Chapters. He helped found the Ridge Chapter while at Sun Aire. He received the Florida GCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service in 2000.



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## NORTH FLORIDA



Proud parents Jason Wilkerson, Bob Solms, Jason Mulcahy, Ken Arsenault, Chris and Rachelle McCranie, with three of the scholarship winners Emma Mulcahy and Georgia and Jenna McCranie.



Keeper of the Green Award winner Nate Maurer with family Bradley, Mary and Mason.



Tom Cowan, Roger Hale, Alex Hale, David Levin, Sterling Thompson and Jason Wilkerson were among a strong turnout for the Memorial Scholarship Tournament.

Our 28th Memorial Scholarship Tournament was in April at the beautiful Jacksonville Golf and Country Club. Temperature was in the mid- to high-70s, with a bright blue sky and a breeze to keep everyone nice and cool. We had a putting contest going for a Traeger pellet grill which was won by Bobby Ellis. After the round we all gathered in the dining room for heavy hors d'oeuvres along with cold beverages.

This year, we were able to award nine scholarships of \$1,200 each to members' children attending college. Our chapter is

so proud to be able to help these students and their parents. Congratulations to: Brianna Arsenault, *daughter of Ken Arsenault*; Jenna McCranie, *daughter of Chris McCranie*; Samantha Maguire, *daughter of Andy Maguire*; Anna Wilkerson, *daughter of Jason Wilkerson*; Emma Mulcahy, *daughter of Jason Mulcahy*; Kimberly Solms, *daughter of Bob Solms*; Evan Shuman, *son of Barry Shuman*; Georgia McCranie, *daughter of Chris McCranie*

The team of Chris McCranie, Al Clements, Alan Brown and Chester Vandenberg won the low gross division of the golf tournament. Low net winners were Chris McRae, Bob Gruber, David Plier and Andy Heartz. Jeff Pilcher won the closest to the pin competition and Hamish MacLean won longest drive.

After winners were announced and raffle prizes were given out, Nate Maurer was presented the 2021 Keeper of the Green award. His wife Mary, two boys and mother and father were there to see him receive this award. Nate is a great superintendent and has been a wonderful leader for the North Florida GCSA and is a thoroughly deserving winner.

Then in May we had our Benevolent Tournament. Due to pandemic restrictions, we had the tournament at a new course The Yards. Everyone played a nine-hole two-man scramble then gathered for a three-hole Par 3 shootout. Lunch was provided by Howard Fertilizer and GMC Global. Winners of the scramble were Bo Irby and Don Branske, with Joey Finchbaum and Ricky Finlayson in second, ahead of Jayce Ramage and Matt Howes.

The shootout was a closest-to-the-pin off one tee in front of everyone, hitting to three different yardages. Jason Mulcahy won a Yeti roadie cooler donated by MacCurrach Golf, Matt Howes won a fishing pole and reel donated by Bulloch Fertilizer and Bo Irby won a \$100

gift card to Bonefish Grill donated by Southeastern Turfgrass. Special thanks to all the beverage cart sponsors.

All proceeds from this tournament go into our Benevolent Fund.

In June, we had our inshore Grand Slam Fishing Tournament with weigh in at Camachee Cove. Brian Almony caught the biggest redfish and Jeff Egolf was the individual points winner. Aquaworld won the team competition ahead of Team Maccurrach.

- Betty Hooten

## SOUTH FLORIDA



Kenton Gamache presents the Presidents Cup to Chris Monserrate from Grand Palms Resort.



Kenton Gamache presents the Vice-Presidents Cup to Kevin Wasilewski of Syngenta.

On July 15, the South Florida GCSA had our annual meeting at Fort Lauderdale Country Club. We would like to start off with a big thank you to our host, Todd Ingram, and all the staff at Fort Lauderdale for a wonderful event.

Our board of directors for 2021-'22 is as follows: President, Kenton Gamache; vice-president, Chris Monserrate; secretary-treasurer, Ryan Jowers; external

# Your Association Needs YOU

Today is a great day to join or renew your membership in the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association



Now turn the page and see a dozen great reasons why  
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## 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

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## GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW RECEPTION

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## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

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## 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](http://www.floridagcsa.com) where you can find news, register for meetings and manage your membership details.

vice-president, Ricky Reeves; immediate past-president, Jason Bailey. Directors - Walter Chavez, John Rowland and Dale Anderson.

I would like to give a big thanks to Ryan Jowers for joining the board this year for the first time and thank you to everyone else for your continued efforts and work for the South Florida Chapter. Last but not least, a special thank you to Lissa Donald-Minus, our association manager for everything she does to make sure everything behind the scenes goes smoothly.

Marco Schiavon presented wonderful education on what is new in turfgrass research at the research center at UF/IFAS in Davie. Marco has a lot of great research in the works and when we have our South Florida Expo next year, he will have a lot of great information and education for us all. Keep an eye out for more information on next year's South Florida Turfgrass Exposition.

Now for the golf results. Todd and the Fort Lauderdale staff did a great job setting up their newly renovated north course for us to play. Everything was in spectacular shape and the greens were rolling perfectly. With that being said, there were some great scores to be had. Kevin Wasilewski of Syngenta was the winner of the Vice-Presidents Cup for vendors with a great score of 72 gross and 67 net. Chris Monserrate had a great day also with an 82 gross and 70 net score to take home the Presidents Cup for superintendents.

A part of this event was for superintendents to compete for five spots to play for South Florida at the State Championship that was coming up at press time at Longboat Key Club. The five superintendents who qualified for the team this year were Bob Harper, Walter Chavez, Joe Pantaleo, Chris Monserrate and Kenton Gamache. It was sure to be a great opportunity for them and everyone else competing in this year's championship at Longboat Key.

Thank you to everyone who turned out for this event. Without everyone's

continued support we would not be able to have these events at great courses like Fort Lauderdale Country Club.

- Kenton Gamache, *The Club at Boca Pointe*

## EVERGLADES



*A record attendance at the luau on the lawn at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club.*



*A view from above the luau.*



*President Cisco Navas reads the winning ticket numbers during the raffle.*



*Board member Tom Caliguire presents the stroke play trophy to Poa Annu champion Dylan Foster.*

This year's long awaited Poa Annu Golf Classic, G.C. Horn Memorial Tournament and luau was a record-breaking success and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The golf tournaments had two full-field shotgun starts with great weather for golf on both Friday and Saturday at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club in Naples. The stroke play event was held again this year at the Country Club of Naples.

Both courses were in fine condition for the events and the Everglades GCSA would like to thank our hosts Holden Jones and Billy Davidson, and their teams, for their efforts in course preparation and conditioning. An excellent job by both golf course maintenance staffs.

The low gross winners of the Poa Annu Scramble event were the team of Tim Denton, Jim Glase, Jimmy Glase and Jeff Glase. The low net winners of the event were the team of Kent Schmidt, Miguel DeLaCruz, David Tennant and Nick Forest.

The winner of the superintendent stroke play event was Dylan Foster from Gulf Harbour Yacht and Country Club. Congratulations to all of this year's winners and thank you to all of the participants in these events.

On a more melancholy note, this year was the final time the Poa Annu could be held at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club because of a new development going in. This venue was home for this event for over 35 years and the Everglades GCSA would like to thank them for being such wonderful hosts for so many years. We appreciate the partnership that we had for so many years and the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club will always hold a very special place in our hearts. Thank you for all that you have done for our chapter and for being such gracious hosts.

The Everglades GCSA would also like to thank our sponsors of this year's Poa Annu. This year, we were not able to host our annual vendor appreciation golf event. So, in lieu of that golf event, the board of directors decided to host a vendor

# CHAPTER ROUND UP

appreciation evening on Thursday prior to the Poa Annua event with hors d'oeuvres and open bar on a lawn near the beach. It was a gorgeous evening with a light breeze off of the gulf. A great time was had by all who attended, and it was a wonderful start to a very nice weekend.

Without their continued support this event and others would not be possible. Thank you to all of our vendors. You all are very much appreciated, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

- Dan Brooks, Panther Run Golf Club

## TREASURE COAST



Some of the new Treasure Coast GCSA leadership, Scott MacPhee, president; Dustin Naumann, director; Dennis Croumie, immediate past-president; and Duane Cyr, external advisory committee member.



A view of beautiful Vero Beach Country Club, host facility for this year's Blue Pearl.

The Treasure Coast GCSA enjoyed our annual Blue Pearl event at Vero Beach Country Club in May. Thanks to our host

superintendent Shane Wright and his staff for awesome conditions for a great day of golf with help from his pro shop and clubhouse staff.

Special thanks to Hector Turf for their continued Presenting Sponsorship of this great event and a huge thank you to platinum sponsors Everglades Equipment and Site One. We are also very grateful to all the numerous other Gold Sponsors that made for a hugely successful event.

The Treasure Coast GCSA also thanks course superintendent Dennis Croumie for hosting our annual meeting at RioMar Country Club in July. Thanks to also to those participants who made it out for some roundtable discussion and a fun 18-hole par 3 event.

## SEVEN RIVERS

The group's May meeting took us over to Golden Ocala Golf and Equestrian Club for a tour of the construction occurring on a new nine-hole addition to the facility. Host superintendent Jack Creveling, Ricky Nix from Ron Garl Golf Course Design and Andy Alcorn from MacCurrach Golf Course Construction led the group around several of the new holes to show the progression of how a golf course is built. Lots of good questions were asked and the group really enjoyed the tour. We followed up with golf on the original 18 and had a great time. Thanks to Jack and staff for the excellent time.

We had a tremendously successful annual meeting at Candler Hills Golf Club in June. Over 40 participants fought off some afternoon thunderstorms to get the round completed. Our guest speaker was Travis Teuton, Ph.D., from SandMeadows Turfgrass Research Facility, speaking on summertime stress challenges on putting greens heading into the fall. Dr. Teuton also answered some questions from the group about tough issues they are facing. Host superintendent Jeff Egolf had the course in great condition. A big thank you to Jeff and his staff for hosting.

Summer always is a tough time to host golf events due to aeration, weather and special projects limiting attendance.

Our next scheduled event is currently set for September as we return back to Rainbow's End Golf Club in Dunnellon. We have plenty of room on the calendar for additional meeting sites, so if you would like to showcase your facility and your staff's hard work, please reach out to me.

- Andy Jorgensen, On Top of the World

## WEST COAST



Florida West Coast leaders for the new business year include from top of the stairs down - Todd Six, Michael Cauley, Gary Cotton, Tony Taylor, Andrew Collier, Sam Mueller and Andy Neiswender.



Mike Giddens was all smiles after receiving his award for being the low net vendor in the golf competition.

# NEFGCSA



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Pat Hickey with his awards from the golf tournament at Old Memorial Golf Club.

The Florida West Coast GCSA annual meeting and chapter championship was on June 29 at Old Memorial Golf Club. Special thanks to host superintendent Sam Mueller and his staff for magnificent course conditions. Carson Kamps, from Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club, had a great day on the course as a winner in the superintendent low gross and low net divisions.

Congratulations to everyone who was a winner on the day -

Low Net Superintendent

- 1 - Carson Kamps
- 2 - Dick Anderson

Low Net Vendor

- 1 - Mike Giddens
- 2 - Matt Nieder

Low Gross Superintendent

- 1 - Carson Kamps
- 1 - Patrick Hickey

Low Gross Vendor

- 1 - Matt Nieder
- 1 - Mark Henderson

Skins - Aaron Martin, Patrick Hickey, Cory Agar

Our annual meeting elected the following leadership for the new business year: president, Todd Six, On Top of the World; vice-president and external vice president, Eli Rahz, Cypress Creek Golf Club; secretary-treasurer, Michael Cauley, Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf Club; immediate past-president, Andy Neiswender, Belleair Country Club.

Directors: Andrew Collier, Avila Golf

and Country Club; Sam Mueller, Old Memorial Golf Club; Mike Strube, Feather Sound Country Club; Chris Senior, Belleair Country Club; equipment manager representative, Bill Cash, Belleair Country Club; vendor representative, Tony Taylor, Noble Turf Products; vendor representative, Gary Cotton, Winfield Solutions (one year term).

- Todd Six, On Top of the World

### **PALM BEACH**



Carl Mistretta, executive director of The First Tee of the Palm Beaches, right, points to the plaque honoring Neil Sheridan, above Mark Reid, from The Breakers, with Katie, Kellen and Lucy Sheridan.



Steve Wright's granddaughter, Lottie Schachner; daughter, Casey Schachner; wife, Sheree; son, Pierce; and Pierce's girlfriend, Anissa Mahroughi, outside the building named in Steve's honor.



George Kervern, from Palm Beach Country Club, with some fascinated fish admirers at the 20th Annual Steve Wright Classic Fishing Tournament.



Declan Freswick and Jason Bagwell, both from Gleneagles Country Club, at the Class B and C tournament.



Ryan Swilley, from Gulf Stream Golf Club; Parker Ferren, CGCS; Billy Browning, of Florikan; and George Farmer, of Yellowstone Landscape; at the Future of Golf Tournament.



Bill Rayside, of Harrell's and George Kervern, from Palm Beach Country Club, at the Future of Golf Tournament.



Mark Reid, from *The Breakers*; and Future of Golf Tournament volunteer, Jensen Kervern, daughter of George Kervern.

The Palm Beach GCSA is thankful to have hosted a number of successful events following a great start to the year. We are most grateful to our members for their continued support of our events and initiatives.

On March 25, we had our annual Class B and C only event at Wellington National Golf Club. A special thank you to Wellington National Golf Club and superintendent Jeff Smolen for hosting

us. Also, many thanks to Everglades Equipment Group for sponsoring and supporting the individuals who make it happen every day. A virtual education session was held following the event. We are most grateful to Ralph Dain, Jeffrey Klontz Jr., and Darren J. Davis, CGCS for presenting to our members and adding valuable tools to our tool chests.

On April 24, we had our First Annual Spring Family Fun Day at The First Tee of the Palm Beaches. We had a great turnout and a fun day for the whole family. There were many fun games including a putting course, lessons on the range, nine-hole challenge, food and a shaved ice truck.

Finally, we have accomplished a formal dedication ceremony of the Steve Wright and Neil Sheridan maintenance buildings at the First Tee complex. Thank you to the Wright and Sheridan families for joining us and celebrating your families and the legacies of Steve and Neil.

Congratulations to Steve's son, Pierce Wright, for winning the first-ever nine-

hole challenge that day. Last but not least, thank you to Carl Mistretta for hosting us and for all you do to grow the game. We are proud supporters of the First Tee of the Palm Beaches.

On June 4 and 5, we held the 20th Annual Steve Wright Classic Fishing Tournament at Blowing Rocks Marina. This year's event had great participation with 18 boats entered. We had 27 total fish caught amongst the teams. Of those fish, 11 were dolphin, 17 were kingfish and one was the mystery fish, a blackfin tuna. The wahoo once again eluded our anglers for the second year in a row.

Congratulations to the captain of the Early Bird, David Tandy, and his team for taking home top boat honors with a total of 57.58 lbs. caught. Thank you to the Wright family for joining us again this year and for finding the leaderboard with the third-place dolphin.

Most recently, we held our 41st Annual Future of Golf Tournament at The Falls Club of the Palm Beaches. We had a sold-out event and a great day of golf and camaraderie. Thank you to Stephen Pearson, CGCS and the entire staff at The Falls for hosting us. Congratulations to this year's winners:

Gross winners: Mark Reid, Blair Kirby, Stuart Bothe, Ashley Byham - 56

Net 1: Dan DaCosta, Mike Davis, Jeff Klontz Jr., Tony Price (56)

2: Jim Rattigan, KC Henderson, Brian Birney, Chris Schultz (57)

3: Kevin Wasilewski, Patrick Stanley, Rob Uzar, John Walls (57)

4: Billy Browning, Ryan Swilley, Parker Ferren, George Farmer (57)

5: Ricky Reeves, Walter Chavez, Chris Monserrate, Ralph Dain (57)

6: Matt Wise, Matt Schuster, Cody Keuler, Mark Brooks (58)

Thank you all once again for supporting the Palm Beach GCSA. At press time, we were looking forward to seeing everyone at our annual meeting late July at Old Marsh Golf Club.

- Ryan Swilley, Gulf Stream Golf Club



## 28TH ANNUAL BLUE PEARL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

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## Record State Budget Takes Aim AT ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

By Seth McKeel and David Shepp

Greetings from The Southern Group. We hope that everyone has remained healthy and safe as we continue to move ever closer to a sense of normalcy throughout Florida.

The Florida Legislature recently concluded the 2021 Regular Session. Although it was held under very different conditions (understandably), the House and Senate were successful in completing their business on time and passing a record-setting Budget for FY 2021-22.

The 2021 Session began on March 2 and concluded on April 30. The Senate remained completely closed to the public and testimony on bills took place at the Civic Center, two blocks from the Capitol. While limited face-to-face meetings and public testimony took place in the House, there were strict protocols for entry in place.

Due to the new protocols, "Day on the Hill" activities for organizations were suspended this year and advocacy was primarily handled through virtual platforms and phone calls. Despite these challenges (or maybe because of fewer people roaming the halls), the 2021 Session saw 275 bills pass both Chambers, the largest number of successful bills since 2016.

A top priority of leadership was providing COVID-19 liability protection to businesses and governments that remained open, safely, during 2020. SB 72 provides heightened liability protections against COVID-19 related claims for all businesses, governments, religious institutions, schools and healthcare facilities. The bill was signed by Governor DeSantis on March 29 and went into effect immediately. The protections apply retroactively and will remain in effect for a year.

Another major focus of House and Senate leadership this year was addressing environmental concerns, namely water quality and threats from climate change and sea level rise. In an effort to stop local governments from discharging polluted water into the ecosystem, the Legislature unanimously passed SB 64, which requires local utilities to eliminate 'non-beneficial' surface water discharges.

Utilities must submit their plans to the Department of Environmental Protections by November 1 of this year and fully implement those plans by 2032. It will be important for golf course superintendents to pay attention to the plans their local utilities develop to comply with the requirements.

The Legislature also unanimously passed legislation addressing the threat of statewide flooding and sea level rise. The Resilient

Florida Grant Program in DEP will provide funding to local governments for resiliency planning and projects to adapt critical assets. DEP is also tasked with developing a comprehensive statewide flood vulnerability and sea level rise assessment that will be used to fund projects to further protect coastal communities. The Budget provides \$500 million, contingent on Federal ARP funds, to initially fund the program.

With so many of the state's golf courses in coastal and low-lying areas, this also is an issue golf course superintendents should pay attention to.

Speaking of the Budget, due to Governor DeSantis keeping Florida open for business during the pandemic, Florida's economy rebounded much faster than anticipated. Sales tax revenues exceeded projections by nearly \$2 billion, providing a stronger-than-anticipated base with which to build the FY 21-22 Budget.

In addition, the Federal American Recovery Plan (ARP) was unveiled during Session and provided an additional \$10 billion in funding for Florida (in addition to funds that will be sent directly to the cities and counties). Due to this unexpected infusion of revenue, the House and Senate were able to craft a Budget exceeding \$100 billion for the first time in Florida's history.

Once again, leadership invested heavily in agricultural and environmental priorities. Programs dealing with Everglades restoration, Florida Forever land conservation, wastewater grants, septic upgrade incentives, water quality enhancement, alternative water supply, beach management and springs restoration, to name a few, received record funding for the next fiscal year.

Now that the 2021 Session has concluded, we turn our focus to planning for the 2022 Session, which begins in January. Committee meetings begin in September, so legislators will now begin putting ideas together for what issues they wish to tackle. Your team at The Southern Group will work with the Florida GCSA government affairs committee to develop our legislative packet this summer, in order to get our proposals in front of key lawmakers early for their consideration. We will also begin planning for Florida GCSA in-person advocacy efforts during the 2022 Session, as the process (hopefully) returns to normal.

Thank you for the honor of representing the Florida GCSA. We wish everyone all the best. ■

- Seth McKeel and David Shepp are with the Florida GCSA's government relations support team at The Southern Group

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# Auction Support Another Feather IN THE CAP OF SUPERINTENDENTS

Florida's performance in this year's Rounds 4 Research auction was just one more example of golf course superintendents achieving in the face of adversity. The Florida GCSA netted just on \$28,000 from the auction despite COVID lingering and the fact it was the second auction in nine months instead of 12.

"We just can't say thank you enough to all those superintendents and their facilities who came forward with donations," Florida GCSA executive director, Jennifer Bryan, says. "Our members have had very full plates as it is with record play in a tight labor market. What they have been able to achieve during the pandemic is very impressive and Rounds 4 Research just adds to that."

Bryan has reiterated that message in recent travels to attend local chapter annual meetings. "To do so well so soon after the 2020 auction in the fall was wonderful, really," she says. "Maybe in 2022 the pandemic will be far enough behind us that we can meet our fundraising target."

Florida's total this year was third overall, behind the Carolinas and Georgia. Nationally, the auction that funds turfgrass research raised more than \$336,000 from the sale of more than 1,100 items.

While Florida's total fell short of a goal of \$50,000, there were mitigating factors beyond the short turnaround time between auctions. As Rounds 4 Research committee chair Parker Ferren, CGCS points out, "Many high-end, private courses in Florida were still dealing with guest restrictions because of COVID-19, which greatly hindered their ability to donate rounds of golf for outside play.

"We are still pleased to have had another successful auction generating funds that will go to great use. And we are extremely thankful to those who participated – both through giving rounds and making monetary donations."

Ben Hanshew from Spring Run Golf Club in Estero will attend his first Golf Industry Show next year – for free – as a result of his support of Rounds 4 Research. Hanshew's name was drawn from among 92 Florida GCSA members whose facilities donated rounds or money to the online auction in May.



Ben Hanshew from Spring Run Golf Club in Estero won a free trip to the Golf Industry Show for supporting Rounds 4 Research.

Hanshew won his trip to GIS in San Diego, CA in February thanks to a \$1,500 package donated by Target Specialty Products. Target has provided the GIS package annually to help encourage participation in the auction. "Not every facility has the budget to send their superintendent, which is why we started offering this prize six or seven years ago," says Target Specialty Products territory manager, Fred Hemming.

"I'm so excited to go next year," Hanshew says. "I've never actually been to GIS. I hoped to go to the show in Orlando the other year but couldn't quite squeeze into the schedule. I'm really looking forward to it, definitely."

The Florida GCSA greatly appreciates the participation of the following facilities in the 2021 Round 4 Research auction:

- Arlington Ridge Golf Club
- Belleair Country Club
- Bent Tree Country Club
- Black Diamond Ranch
- Boca Woods Country Club
- Calusa Lakes Golf Club
- Candler Hills Golf Club
- Casselberry Golf Club

- Cedar Hammock Golf and Country Club
- Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf club
- Copperleaf Golf Club
- Country Club of Ocala
- Cypress Woods Golf and Country Club
- Eastpointe Country Club
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- Fairways Golf Club
- Grande Vista Golf Club
- Grasslands Golf and Country Club
- Gulf Stream Golf Club
- Hawk's Landing Golf Club
- Heritage Oaks Golf and Country Club
- Hobe Sound Golf Club
- Hollywood Beach Golf Club
- Indian Lakes Estates Golf Course
- Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club
- Interlachen Country Club
- Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club
- Jacaranda West
- John's Island Club
- Juliette Falls Golf Club
- Jupiter Country Club
- JW Marriott Marco Island Golf Resort
- Kelly Greens Golf & Country Club
- Kings Gate

- La Iguana Golf Course
- Lake Nona Golf & Country Club
- Lakewood National Golf Club
- Lemon Bay Golf Club
- Longboat Key Club - Harbourside
- Longboat Key Club - Links
- Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club
- Mark Bostick Golf Course & Univ. of Florida
- Mayfair Country Club
- Mission Inn Resort and Club
- Misty Creek Country Club
- Naples Heritage Golf & Country Club
- Ocala Golf Club
- Old Memorial Golf Club
- Palm Beach Country Club
- Panther Run Golf Club
- Pelican Marsh Golf Club
- Pelican Pointe Golf & Country Club
- Pelican's Nest Golf Club
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- Royal Poinciana Golf Club
- Sanctuary Ridge Golf Club
- Sara Bay Country Club
- Spring Run Golf Club
- St. Petersburg Country Club
- Stone Creek Golf Club
- SummerGlen Golf Club
- The Club at Eaglebrooke
- The Dye Preserve
- The Forest Country Club
- The Monarch at Royal Highlands
- The Oaks Club - Eagle Course
- The Oaks Club - Heron Course
- The Venice Golf and Country Club
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John Reilly first improved the water quality at Longboat Key Club, as the teeming bird population shows, now he's working on conservation.

by John Reilly

## Water Matters: How District IS HELPING GOLF CONSERVE

Sometimes you are a victim of your own ingenuity and sometimes you are just full of “shite.” This is a tale about being somewhere in the middle those two poles.

Fourteen years ago, the bottom dropped out of the housing market and with it went my dream job: Sugarloaf Mountain. I was fortunate to see the market crashing and was on the prowl for my next prisoner, ... I mean, golf job.

I heard about an opening at Longboat Key Club and everything seemed better than good on paper, but why did it seem like I was the only one applying? During my first interview the GM told me, “We have some kind of salt water problem.” At that point, he abruptly ended our meeting. The course had looked 50 shades of gray touring around. I left thinking, “Oh, well, no harm no foul,” and two weeks later I accepted the post as the resort’s director of agronomy.

Some kind of salt water problem might have been THE understatement of understatement: 45 holes on the Gulf of Mexico, an 18-hole course with circa 1965 pins and wheels hydraulic controllers, 27 holes Par Plus hydraulic control, no central control anywhere, no as-builds, eight direct feed pump stations with wonky open delta power pumping out 10,000 TDS ppm and a consumptive use permit from Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Seven years flew by in a blink, and nothing changed except the quality of the turf, mostly from pure stick-to-it-iveness. In my eighth year, a family-based hotel company, Ocean Properties, purchased the resort. We found our salt tolerant grass and did 18 holes of irrigation. We were off and running.



John Reilly is proof that, despite his own doubts, it can be worth pursuing District funding for water conservation efforts on golf courses.

With 27 holes left to address, priorities then change, the honeymoon ends, and let’s face it, business is business. The paspalum grass was a game changer for our property and our circa 1984 irrigation on the 27-hole side was about 20 years younger than the renovated Links Course.

I do not really remember it becoming an either/or type of thing, but I chose grass thinking the irrigation was so bad they would have to let me upgrade eventually. Maybe not my finest moment. But the Harbourside 27-hole facility ended up with a wall-to-wall regrassing and only nine new holes of irrigation. In a lot of ways, I did a disservice to whole course, kind of like fixing the corner of a necklace. We were only as strong as our weakest link.

One day three years ago, my FIS Outdoor rep, Tony Abshire, mentioned a program for cooperative funding from the water management authority. He told me about the Bartow Golf Course and Temple Terrace Golf and Country Club being awarded funding. I said, “Sure, but is the District going to consider a private resort? I don’t think so.”

Then Tina Neuzil, from Toro, also mentioned the program and I had a moment of clarity. To that point, my existence with our irrigation system was a constant game of “whack-o-mole.” Seeing the light, I had Tony set up a meeting with Josh Madden from the District. Josh showed up and did not laugh me out of the locker room. He told me how to apply and even offered to help. Several weeks later, Josh and his colleague, Cassidy Hampton, came to Harbourside for a tour and things got real after that.

Here is the bottom line. The District is serious about conserving water, and they are willing to put their money where their mouth is.

I had nine holes of a modern IC system already and was showing them the daily gallonage savings just by changing to a modern head and getting spacing correct. I was trying to fill a lull in the conversation and showed them some shell we harvested on site to make a dune. I explained that we plant the dune native and that we don’t irrigate there. Cassidy asked if it used to be irrigated and she said funding might be available for removing irrigated areas as well.

By tour’s end, we decided to combine the technology upgrade and irrigated turf removal to the overall application to the tune of \$557,500 of reimbursable funding. At that figure I am thinking there is no way this endeavor goes in our favor.

Let me tell you this, folks, the application is long, electronic, arduous and oozing with beauracrat mumbo jumbo, if you know what I mean. Many times, I said we are never going to get this funding and why am I even trying? Anyone who knows me knows that the initial application had to be the act of a desperate man.

After completing the application exercise, the estimated water-use savings daily was above 30 percent. These folks at the water management district are not in the golf business, so it was a little hard for them to get their heads around the fact that adding heads could reduce water use. The numbers were what the numbers were, but the increase in heads increased the District’s copay. You see the District is paying half on technology used to reduce water and sprinkler heads meet that definition.

Once we explained nines ways to Sunday



The staging area for Liebold Irrigation at Longboat Key Club is proof that partially District-funded work is underway.

how we were going to reduce water long term the water management district put us on the agenda. “We” was a relative term. It really was just me. Of course, I told my company and anyone who would listen that I was going for the funding. In reality, no one gave me a rat’s chance, not even me. I went to the first hearing in February 2020, and we were added to the FY2021 docket for fundable projects.

Of course, 2020 became a great year for the game of golf and it turned out even better for us thanks to item Q145 Conservation - Longboat Key Club Advanced Irrigation System.

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The matriculation process for the project started in a four-county sub-committee, including Sarasota, Manatee, Desoto and Charlotte. The first meeting in February 2020 was in-person and we had a little pushback from one of the governing board members citing Longboat Key as a well-to-do area capable of funding its own upgrades. Despite this gentleman's protestations the project passed on to the next board meeting where it was voted to advance to full District governing board meeting early in the summer.

The water management district has a rating system and project Q145 had a high rating. This was honestly the first time I thought we had a chance to get the funding. Summer came and we were approved with a slight adjustment that based the District's share off of a cost-effectiveness ranking of "high." They had a cost effectiveness calculator, and it adjusted the District's reimbursement from \$557,500K to \$508,516K.

The next hurdle, I thought, was to make it into the overall District budget. I announced our win to my ownership and the District allowed us to start some pre-bid work so we could hit the ground running if and when we got final approval.

As much as I thought not having in-person meetings helped the project pass, our progress was met less than enthusiastically by Longboat's ownership. The pandemic had created one of the worst travel markets in history. Couple that with the country's imminent political change and once again irrigation at Longboat Key looked dead on the vine.

Nonetheless, my owners let me move forward with the pre-bid process. Q145 is two projects in one, earthwork and irrigation. At this point, it becomes a District project. Bids, material lists, contracts and billing have to follow certain protocols.

When the District approval was confirmed, my hope was to start work early fall and finish mid-season 2021. But then procurement on both sides got involved and we finally settled on contractors and materials late spring this year. Our installer was to start at the end of July and our construction crew was ready roll. Cost of the total project is just south of \$2 million with the



*Traditional cart paths have given way to a natural surface at Longboat Key Club.*

State providing \$508,516K of cooperative funding for technology associated with water savings and the increase of unirrigated native areas on the course.

For me, it was a process born of necessity. It was never comfortably or easy. Like many things that involve me, it takes a village and there are too many people to thank for getting me through the approval process. But I have to say, environmental scientist, Cassidy Hampton, deserves the lion's share of the credit for her help and continued guidance, which has been nothing short of amazing. Cassidy has helped Longboat Key reduce future water consumption by 30 percent. That means we are talking about millions and millions of gallons of a critical and finite resource.

Water matters it really does, and I am here to tell you that money may be available to help your facility make its own contribution to that cause. ■

*- John Reilly is director of agronomy at The Resort at Longboat Key Club in Sarasota.*



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# GOLF PAVES SETH'S PATH TO HEAVEN

by Trent Bouts

**I**t's a testament to your abilities when the trophy shelf throws in the towel. Still, that's not the first thought that ran through Seth Strickland's mind the day he opened his office door to carnage. The floor was covered in shattered glass and dinged up silver. "It looked like a bomb went off," he says.

Lending to that impression, macabrely, amongst it all lay three miniature likenesses of the late great Bobby Jones. Those "bodies" used to sit atop the trophies Strickland, left, won as GCSAA's national golfing champion, in 2005, '08 and '09. He won each of those titles during a now nearly 20-year stint as golf course superintendent at Miami Shores Country Club.

Of course, he's won plenty of other tournaments in that time too, hence the hardware overload above his desk that day. There's the Poa Annua Classic, Crowfoot Classic and Florida Turfgrass Association titles that he's won each of multiple times. He might also have won another leg of the

Florida slam, the Fall Classic, but he's never played, his participation requiring a nearly 800-mile round trip to Amelia Island after all.

So, while it is more than a decade since he last won the national championship, Strickland remains one of a small handful of the very best superintendent golfers in the entire country. He has been runner-up three times since, including last year, by a single shot to fellow Floridian Deron Zendt. Strickland, Zendt and the third member of their group, Texan Steve Gilley, all shot four-under par 32s on the closing nine with some of the best golf seen in the history of the event.

That was Zendt's second national championship, to go along with nine Florida GCSA championships. At press time, late July, Strickland had yet to win that event, a fact that Zendt has good-naturedly pointed out over the years. "I was always go back with, 'Yeah, but who has more national championships, right?'" Strickland laughs.

Friendly rivalries like that, the adrenalin that flows with high-level competition and the journey to find the absolute best you have are what brings Strickland to the tee over and over. "It's not the trophies," he says. "I love to win but I'm a good loser. I just love to compete. I love it. I'm not so interested in having trophies on mantles."

Indeed, the most prized possession on Strickland's reconstructed shelf today is a photo of him with some golfing buddies, among them former bosses, Chip Lewinson, CGCS now at Saddlebrook Resort, and, Jim Torba, now at Pelican Preserve Golf Club. Strickland worked for Torba at the University of South Florida in Tampa, a period he remembers fondly.

"It was a work-fest and it was a play-fest. It was so much fun," he says. "Jim made work so much fun. We'd get done with work every day and then we'd play basketball, we'd play golf. Eric Swenson (now at Floridian National) was working with us too. It was a blast."

Then Strickland spent three years under Lewinson at Plant City Country Club, while attending community college. He was also giving lessons. "I can't remember what the circumstances were, but the head pro stopped working for some reason and they didn't have anyone to give lessons," he says. "So, I was doing that after work and making a little money on the side, which was nice. I remember liking it, but I loved working on the golf course, I loved it from the beginning."

It was at that point Strickland chose golf course maintenance over life as a golf professional, a prospect that had been hanging out there in some shape or form for some time. While at USF, Strickland says Torba convinced him to try his luck on



Seth Strickland and his reconstructed shelf with three trophies missing Bobby Jones, top right, just above the cleaning products.

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the local mini tour, which he did in four or five events. "I don't remember exactly how many, but I did win one," he says. "I had to finish birdie, birdie, birdie to win. My best recollection is that I shot a 68. The entry fee was \$100, and I think the prize was \$300."

Soon after that event, Strickland began the process that eventually returned his amateur status with the USGA.

Strickland didn't pick up a club until he was "11 or 12" but by high school he was competing at a high level and, naturally, thoughts of playing golf for a living crossed his mind. "But I never really thought, you know, let me give this a try," he says. "This was something I did for fun as a hobby. I knew deep down inside that I wasn't good enough. I never really felt like I had the type of fire power it takes."

From USF, Torba moved to Miami Shores Country Club, and it was from there in 2002, that he called Strickland, at Plant City, to see if he would consider a move south. The two had stayed in touch and played golf now and then. Even so, Strickland thinks both were surprised when he called Torba back a few days later and said, "Yes."

"I mean, who wants to move to Miami, right?" Strickland laughs. "I'd grown up in Tampa and been living in Plant City, which is basically heartland America. And Miami is so cosmo-



Some of Strickland's mementos survived the shelf crash, among them, photos from each of his national championship presentations and his autographed photo with Jack Nicklaus.





Seth Strickland's firmly established daily routine gives him plenty of time with daughter, Shayla, and son, Colby, and the family dogs.

politan with this big city feel and much faster paced. It was a bit of a culture shock."

By now, Torba was busy with a grow-in at Miami Beach Country Club but retained an oversight role at Miami Shores. Strickland says it was the perfect scenario for Torba to round out his role as mentor. Torba introduced Strickland to his circle, which included significant figures in the profession like Joe Pantaleo, Bob Harper, Rickey Reeves and Jason Bagwell. The group played a lot of golf.

"Oh my God, these guys taught me everything I know," Strickland says. "I don't want to say I didn't know anything when I first came down here. But I can't begin to explain how much playing golf with those guys and picking their brains helped me along in my career."

Those opportunities were one of many Strickland is grateful for, not just in his career but also in life. And he says he has golf to thank.

"If not for golf and being able to play at a decent level, Jim Torba and I might not have hit it off the way we did. I might not have met those guys and learned from them," he says. "I tell my wife, 'If it wasn't for golf, none of this would have happened.' I wouldn't have met her, I wouldn't have my children, I wouldn't be at this wonderful place. It's just an absolute miracle when I think about how everything has transpired."

Strickland was the new guy at Miami Shores around the same

time the club hired a new receptionist. After six months or so, Strickland asked her out and they clicked. Today, he and Resa have a daughter, Shayla, 12, and a son, Colby, 10. "Those guys Jim Torba introduced me too, they all came to the wedding," he says.

Those relationships, that grounding, provided important scaffolding when Strickland arrived at a "turning point" about 10 years. "I worked hard, and I played hard," he says. "I made some life changes. My kids were here, and I made a decision to set a schedule, follow the schedule and live by the schedule. And it's been amazing. My life is 1,000 times better than it was 10 years ago."

That schedule begins at 4am every day when Strickland rises to be at work by 5am. He tries to finish by 3pm then spends time with his kids – the family home is very close – then he hits balls for 30 or 45 minutes. "Just to unwind. I don't know if it's necessarily to get better at golf. It's just my release," he says. "Then after that, it's family time. I'm asleep by 8pm, wake up at 4 and start over again."

He plays at least once a week. "Religiously," he says. "Sometimes twice. There's a group of good players that get together. That's why I do this. I love golf and I love playing golf."

Miami Shores is a city-owned semi-private facility that opened in 1939. Two major hazards bisect the golf course, the Biscayne Canal Number C-8 and the Florida East Coast railroad. Dolphin sometimes cruise the canal and as on-course signs attest, coyotes find their way onto the golf course.

"I have always had high expectations for the golf course, but I feel like my own expectations get higher and higher each year," Strickland says. "I am fortunate because I am answerable to a general manager, Alberto Pozzi, who interviewed me for the job here. He is a great guy who has had a major impact on my life on and off the course. He has done everything possible for me to be successful at Miami Shores."

Their relationship works well, Strickland says, in part because he has very clear priorities. "My theory for how I operate is to have the greens as fast as humanly possible on a daily basis, and everything else as good as possible. And that thinking seems to make our clientele happy."

Strickland's greens are Mini-Verde, thanks to a major renovation in 2011, that also included an overhaul of all bunkers. Over the years, Miami Shores has hosted the Florida State Open and celebrity players like Bob Hope and Joe DiMaggio. While Strickland prefers space away from the limelight, he has shaken hands with some big names himself. Jack Nicklaus handed Strickland his first national championship trophy in 2005.

"I was like a deer in the headlights," he says. "I was 30. I was speechless. I didn't have any idea what to say. I'm not that kind



His goals for the course get higher each year, but Seth Strickland feels like Miami Shores Country Club has been "absolute heaven" all along.

of a person but this was something else. I was in awe. Pure awe. He was very nice. I wish I could have that moment over again. I think I would talk a little more, human to human, instead of me with a legend golfer."

He accepted his next trophy from Greg Norman and did talk a little more. "He was a really nice guy," Strickland says. His third, in New Orleans, was handed over by Paul Azinger, whose first words to Strickland were, "You look terrible." "It was a long night on Bourbon Street," Strickland says. "I love that golf tournament. There are some amazing players, and it is so much fun to compete and get to know them."

And those memories are the "trophies" he treasures most. Of the material kind, he does value three flags, one from the scene of each national championship win. He is also fond of an autographed photo of Jack Nicklaus. "My mom got him to sign it for me," he says. "Or was it my wife? Or my mom? I'm not sure."

What he is certain about is that Miami Shores is home.

"I love what I do here, and I love the situation I'm in," he says. "My son is about to go practice golf with his buddies. My daughter goes to gymnastics literally five minutes from here." And Resa is still working in the clubhouse, now as operations manager.

"This place is absolutely heaven for me." ■

## New Favorite Trophy

Right before the presses were set to roll with this issue of The Florida Green, Seth Strickland earned himself a new "favorite trophy." But he had a little help, which of course is what made it so special. Strickland partnered with his son, Colby, to win the division for parents and children aged 10 to 12 in Disney's annual Parent-Child Championship.



Almost 500 competitors made their way to Orlando for the annual event. The 18-hole championship took place at Celebration Golf Club, ChampionsGate Golf Resort and Orange County National, while a 9-hole championship was played at the Walt Disney World Golf. Seth and Colby, above, won their division with 61 total points, thanks to four birdies and an eagle in the final round to secure the championship by six points.



## Franklin Leaves Comfort Zone SOME 2,300 MILES BEHIND HIM

For many of us, the comfort zone extends as far as our known experience. Beyond that, the risk of the unknown outweighs the potential reward, so we stick with what we know. Ryan Franklin, former golf course superintendent at St. Petersburg Country Club, has been pushing his boundaries for some time and now finds himself more than half-way across the country.

It's not just the miles that matter. As golf course superintendent at Fossil Island Golf Club in Kemmerer, Wyoming, Franklin's work environment could hardly be more different.

He remembers griping whenever he had to drive 30 minutes to a Florida West Coast GCSA meeting. Today, Franklin's nearest chapter event is at least two hours away. He's gone from 18 holes of member-owned country club to nine that are municipally owned. And those are antelope not gators by the pond. Oh, and those guys on the course in February aren't golfers, they're cross-country skiers.

Soon after arriving in the town of about 3,000 people at an elevation close to 7,000 feet, Franklin found his job title expand to include director of parks, which means he's also responsible for nine parks - some with camp sites - three baseball fields, a reservoir and when there is an event like a two-day music festival that just took place, he's on call for that too.

"Basically, if anything breaks, I get to fix it," he says. "Talk about wearing multiple hats. And then there's the snow removal in winter too, of course."

Franklin, 35, says he is surprised as anyone to find himself where he is. After five years at Trump National Golf Club in

Washington, DC and another five in St. Petersburg, he was ready for a change of atmosphere. His wife Samantha parlayed her physical therapy skills into a traveling role and the couple settled first in Tennessee. But that wasn't exactly what they were looking for.

They had both been attracted to the idea of trying life out west, so they landed in Colorado. But then the pandemic shut down the job Samantha had taken, and the couple was on the move again. Franklin found the job in Kemmerer and started work in April of 2020. Samantha is now programs director at the town recreation center.

"I never in my life thought I'd set foot here," Franklin laughs. "To be honest, I had to look at a map and see where Kemmerer was, but then I suppose everyone does." They might have heard of it as home to the first J.C. Penny store, which opened in 1902.

Regardless, "Wyoming is an awesome place," Franklin says. "The outdoors is awesome. We're heading to Yellowstone in a couple of weeks. It will be our first time. But we've been to the Grand Tetons four times this year already. The hiking is incredible, and the wildlife is really cool. We even have hikes right out our back door."

That's not to say their new life doesn't have its challenges.

"It is a great place but it's a lot slower paced, I'll say that. You've got to be easy going," he says. "That's the best way to go about it. I grew up outside of Chicago, then lived in DC and then St. Pete. But here, you put the brakes on."

Some things just take a little longer. Neither FedEx nor UPS de-

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liver on Saturdays and when your vendors are based a couple of hours away, it's not like they can swing by with a part or a pallet in half an hour. "My vendors are great," Franklin says. "They help where they can. But that's just not realistic."

As a result, he finds himself planning ahead, even for unlikely outcomes. "Put it this way, I've got to have spare parts on the shelf even for things you might not think you'll need to fix," he laughs.

And even when materials do arrive, sometimes they don't always arrive at once. A recent irrigation project on the parks side was a constant on-off affair. "I'm sure the pandemic had something to do with it too, but all we could get were 16 sticks of PVC pipe a week," Franklin says. "We'd build a section with those 16 sticks then wait until the next 16 showed up, then build that, and so on. We're always at the end of the line when it comes to getting things out here."

Some of the best parts of his new role have turned up in places he least expected.

"I'm used to a country club golf setting where you're catering to middle-aged and senior men and women. But in the parks, you've got young people too and kids everywhere," he says. "One of the biggest surprises for me was what came out of building a new playground over the ball fields recently. To see and hear the kids laughing and playing on this playground and having such a good time was actually really rewarding. Seeing the appreciation they had for it was really exciting, really cool."

On the golf course, Franklin tends A4 bentgrass greens and a bluegrass fescue blend everywhere else. The golf season runs, generally, from the end of April to the end October, depending on the temperature and the snow. This year, one of his biggest challenges has been water supply, something that tightened even further recently when helicopters had to pull water to fight a 160-acre fire about 30 miles away.

Like any superintendent, he'd like to have more help on the course too. "We're an older golf course and, being city-owned, we have a limited budget," he says. "I have one guy who works 10 hours a week, one who does 15, and another who does 15 hours on the golf course and 10 in the clubhouse."

To help keep wheels rolling and fund some of the aspirations Franklin has for improving the golf course, he says he does "a lot of grant writing." "That's been a big change," he says. "And scheduling everything. The golf course and the parks run on separate budgets but in reality, I have to run them as one because we have equipment that moves back and forth. It's that small town thing, everyone helps each other out."

What the next horizon for the Franklins is "a great question.



Ryan Franklin and wife, Samantha, at home sporting t-shirts after participating in GCSAA's virtual 5km run as part of the Golf Industry Show earlier this year.

I have no idea," he says. But at least for now, Kemmerer is it. The couple bought a house and fitted their loyal lab Mac with snow booties so he can get out and about in winter. If Franklin has any regret about their move, it is on behalf of Florida GCSA president Andy Neiswender.

Franklin was on the board of the Florida West Coast chapter and in line to be president when they decided to leave St. Petersburg. Franklin's departure bumped Neiswender ahead a year in the chapter leadership, which in turn saw him serve as state chapter president during the challenging times of the pandemic.

If it's any consolation to Neiswender, at least Franklin had to pay some dues. After buying their house, he returned to Florida to collect their belongings out of

storage and drive them across country – what would be a 32-hour trek, without stops.

"Let's just say, I never thought I would spend that much time with myself in a moving truck," Franklin says. ■

- Trent Bouts

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# From the Course to Council: HILL TAKES TURN INTO POLITICS

Jim Hill did his share of waking up in the middle night, surprised to find he wasn't actually on the fairway mower he'd been dreaming about. He knows what it means to be a golf course superintendent, having the job constantly occupying his consciousness, no matter where he is or what time of day it is. He theorizes that the around-the-clock nature of the profession may be what prevents more superintendents from taking the path he did, into politics.

Today, Hill is Vice Mayor of the City of Sebastian. But when he was first elected to council in 2000, he was golf course superintendent at The Majors Golf Club in Palm Bay. In all, he spent 10 years as a superintendent including stints at Suntree Country Club, Kissimmee Bay Country Club and Pointe West Golf Club.

Hill got his first taste of the industry as a crew laborer at John's Island Club in 1990, first under Tim Hiers, CGCS then Greg Pheneger. He liked it so much, he went to college five years later, earning degrees in environmental horticulture and turfgrass management. In 2007, he founded Innovative Drain Technologies, which he runs to this day.

His first run on council ended in 2004, but he ran again, successfully, in 2008 and has been stewarding city affairs ever since, including four terms as mayor. He believes some of his former colleagues are well-equipped, at least in terms of skills, to do the same in their own hometowns.

"When I got my first job as a superintendent, I was 27 at a



Jim Hill believes the superintendent skill set translates well into the world of government.

36-hole private club with about 1,400 members," he says. "You become pretty savvy, in ways that I think have helped so much in my political career. You're constantly dealing with members who had different ideas of what the course should be or what they wanted it to be. You have to be pretty good at politics to be in a situation like that."

Hill believes an ability to negotiate the politics, coupled with some other traits at the core of every successful superintendent, qualify many of them to make their own run. For one, superintendents are accustomed to problem solving and well aware that most decisions they make come with pros and cons. Additionally, superintendents rarely make decisions based on emotion, instead they draw on evidence and experience, science if you like.

"You hear people say that being a superintendent is not rocket science, and of course it's not," Hill says. "But it is turfgrass science. There's a definite science to nearly everything a superintendent does."

Evidence and experience eventually convinced Hill to make a career switch in 2007, creating his business restoring flow capacity to golf course drainage. A few years earlier, he'd taken the job at Pointe West where some greens were "full of algae" and devoid of grass on up to a third of the putting surface.

"There hadn't been much money put into it and it had been

overwatered without doing much in the way of cultural practices," Hill says. "I realized quickly that the drainage system was not functioning properly. I talked to people in the industry and the consensus was that there wasn't a whole lot I could do except dig it up. That wasn't something I wanted to do in January, in the middle of the golf season when you're trying to run golfers through. Digging up the golf course then wouldn't have been a good look for me as the new guy."

So, Hill investigated outside the industry and discovered a technique used by landfills to keep drainage open beneath the pile. He found they flushed their systems each year with high-pressure water to make sure the drains and their perforations remained clear, so water that seeped into the ground could be funneled to retention ponds.

"I contacted somebody and had them come to my golf course and test the process on a few greens and was shocked at how well it worked," Hill says. "We found that many of the outfall pipes were buried in lakes. We got those opened back up and within a few months I had outstanding root systems on the TifEagle greens, and they grew back in nicely."

Hill kept testing and learning the process over several years and became convinced it had widespread application in a golf setting. Now, he says, some clients use the process as a preventative measure, not just as a remedy once problems occur.

"Excessive moisture is a stress that leads to a lot of problems," he says. "Healthier roots and healthier turf mean more resistance to disease and pests and less applications. That's why the USGA says that drainage is the heart of greens built to USGA specs."

Hill suggests most superintendents constantly apply those principles of investigating, experimenting and acting upon the results. Certainly, more so than some of the people he encounters in local politics.

"A lot of people make undedicated decisions on things, like fertilization for instance," he says. "They're trying to get these blackouts, with no fertilization during summer months, when we all know that the turf plant needs more fertility in summer and less in winter. If you're putting it out in the winter and the turf is not taking it up, then when it rains you're basically throwing that stuff into the lagoon."

"Many people out there think superintendents are throwing chemicals all over the place, killing weeds and killing pests with no regard for the environment. But I would venture to suggest that most golf course superintendents are very much environmentalists. I certainly am, from the standpoint of understanding that golf courses provide green space and habitat, a lot of the things people are screaming that development doesn't provide. So, education is important."

Yet, very few superintendents enter that realm to provide the education, whether as a resource or as an active participant.

"It is rare, and I think it could be because of time," Hill says. Both

roles, being a superintendent and serving in local government, take an inordinate amount of time. "Rather than spending my weekends and evenings hanging out with friends and family, say at a little bar, I'm home reading about issues I know are going to be coming before council. And it takes up a lot of time to be superintendent too, and not just in the sense that you're at the course from 6.30am to 3.30pm every day. You're constantly on call. That could be the issue."

But the rewards in both jobs are significant, he says. Of course, Hill governs on more than golf industry concerns. He first got involved because of what was happening to the "small fishing village" he'd grown to love.

"Sebastian was a real small town, then we started seeing cookie cutter-type stores popping up in historical areas," he says. "For me, I was immediately freaked out because I liked the feel of that small fishing village that I lived in for so long. I think over the two decades I've been involved we've done a heck of a job. Sure, the community is going to grow and develop but it's happened in a way that we've been able to retain the character, keep the vibe, of the place."

Of course, more recently, Sebastian has also been immersed in major debates on fertilizer blackouts and pesticide use in the city limits. Hill arranged for University of Florida experts to provide a scientific perspective on fertilizer blackouts and how they don't necessarily achieve the goal and can actually be detrimental.

"We won that battle at first," Hill says. "But we ended up losing eventually so now we have a blackout regulation. Then we lost the Round Up issue, but I worked with a local group and now the law is back to where pesticide use is managed on the basis of the science. It's been a struggle but without my experience in the industry, I don't believe we would have been able to get that far with the things we've done." ■

- Trent Bouts



Former golf course superintendent Jim Hill speaks to a school class about his work in local government.



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## Ballmark Volunteers Enjoy TOASTING THEIR OWN SUCCESS

Members at Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club raise a toast to their own efforts fixing ballmarks and divots.

It's one of those "sliced bread" ideas where the appeal becomes obvious once you put it out there. Kevin Sunderman calls it "Ballmarks and Beers." Sunderman packs a cooler with beer and wine and hosts members on a ballmark repair tour of Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club in St. Petersburg.

The payoff, Sunderman says, is manifold. Not only are greens better off in the short term, the participating members learn the correct repair technique and, in turn and in time, pass that on to their playing partners, effectively becoming ballmark repair ambassadors.

Moreover, Sunderman, who is current GCSAA secretary-treasurer, gets time to build relationships with those members in a stress-free environment. "You become more of an expert in their eyes, because you have time to talk in a lot more depth about what you do and why," he says. "And everyone's having a good time while you're doing it."

Sunderman launched his project shortly before the Golf Industry Show last year, which also meant it was shortly before the pandemic took hold. So, while the event was successful, it was nearly another 12 months before he hosted another. "I will do more but it's simply been a timing thing to date," he says.

"Ballmarks and Beers" has an older sibling at Isla Del Sol. Sunderman also hosts "Divot Days" where member volunteers fill fairway divots. The divot work, he says, is not as taxing as

ballmark repair. "Working on ballmarks for an extended period can make your hamstrings sore," he says.

Sunderman recruits volunteers through his golf course maintenance department blog and the club's weekly email blast. There is a sign-up sheet in the golf shop. "I think 15 to 20 is an ideal number," he says. "More than 20 is too many to coordinate properly."

Over the past year, Sunderman ran "Divot Days" every other week through summer on Tuesdays before the first tee-time at 10am. This frequency was in response to COVID and the absence of sand bottles on carts. In normal times, "Divot Days" are a quarterly event.

Sunderman anticipates hosting most "Ballmarks and Beers" outings in winter. "That's when we see the most play and ballmarks can be more of an issue because of the slow growth," he says. "Once February arrives, ballmarks are the subject of most of the complaints we receive."

Sunderman says other superintendents considering their own ballmark repair "parties" would do well to include wine in their cooler. "Most of the ladies who have helped out prefer wine and we have had great support from our lady members," he says. "My green chair at the moment is a woman and she has helped encourage participation." ■

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# Investigating the Puzzle OF LANCE NEMATODES

by Dr. Billy Crow

The three most important kinds of nematodes on warm-season turfgrasses on golf courses - “the big three” - are sting, root-knot and lance nematodes. Lance nematodes are not the most directly damaging of this trio, but they are the most difficult to manage and are also the most difficult to diagnose. Concern about lance nematodes has increased among golf course superintendents, particularly as some of our newer nematicides can provide good results on the other two major kinds of nematodes but not on lance.

There are several species of lance nematodes known to feed on warm-season turfgrasses. However, the most common, and the species that I conduct research on, is *Hoplolaimus galeatus*. Be aware that when I am writing about lance nematodes, I am specifically referencing *H. galeatus*, but it is possible that other species of lance nematode on turf might behave differently.

On turf, lance nematodes are what nematologists call “migratory endoparasites.” This means that they tunnel into turf roots, tunnel around within the roots feeding as they move from cell to cell, and can tunnel back out again. Activity by these nematodes destroys root cells, disrupts root tissue, and creates entry points for root pathogens.

Lance nematodes are found in both the soil and within turf roots, so, ideally, systemic nematicides that kill nematodes within roots would be ideal. This is a reason that fenamiphos (Nemacur) was so effective against a wide array of nematodes. It had both systemic and contact activity.

Unfortunately, in 2021 we do not have any true systemic turfgrass nematicides available. The three most commonly-used nematicides for nematodes on warm-season golf grasses are Fluopyram (Indemnify), Abamectin (Divanem, Todal, Nema-nectin), and 1,3-dichloropropene (Curfew). 1,3-Dichloropropene will kill lance nematodes outside of roots at the time of application, but it but does not kill those inside roots and has no residual activity, so it is of limited use against lance nematodes.

Abamectin kills lance nematodes it contacts, but only those outside of the roots and, due to its limited movement, only in the extreme upper-portion of the soil profile. While fluopyram is effective against most kinds of nematodes, lance nematodes are one of the few kinds on which this nematicide does not work.

Therefore, none of our current nematicide options work well against lance nematodes. In our turfgrass nematicide trials with current nematicides we typically observe increases in numbers of lance nematodes over time from repeated applications. At the UF Nematode Assay Lab we have observed sharp increases in the numbers of lance nematodes recovered from bermudagrass



Dr. Billy Crow



Biological scientist, Wade Davidson, is the new lab manager for the research side of the program at the University of Florida Landscape Nematology and Nematode Assay Lab in Gainesville.

greens since the launch of fluopyram and abamectin nematicides in 2016.

Despite poor efficacy of current nematicides against lance nematodes, it is not uncommon to observe positive turf response from nematicide applications. We believe this is due to control of other plant-parasitic nematodes present, and possibly impacts on fungal pathogens and turf pests. Sometimes we recover very high numbers of lance nematodes from healthy-appearing turf.

Diagnosing lance nematodes is also difficult due to their migra-

tory endoparasitic, lifestyle. Are the numbers recovered from soil an accurate assessment of the population? When should we sample for lance nematodes? What should the ‘thresholds’ be? I have long thought that the thresholds we were using needed revision. The UF Nematode Assay Lab started using a mist extraction method for extracting root-knot nematodes from turf plugs and roots. On warm-season grasses, mist extraction is superior to soil extraction for root-knot nematodes. Lance nematodes are also recovered by mist extraction. Could mist extraction results be superior to soil extraction for lance nematodes too?

Our two-year experiment funded by the GCSAA Cooperative Chapter Research Program with the Florida GCSA sought insight into the following questions: 1) What action thresholds should we use for lance nematodes on warm-season turf? 2) Which extraction method is most accurate for lance nematodes? 3) When is the best time to sample for lance nematodes?

### Trial Description

To answer these questions, we selected two test sites, one was TifEagle bermudagrass at the University of Florida Research and Education Center in Ft. Lauderdale (South Florida) and the other was Sunday bermudagrass at the University of Florida Plant Science Unit in Citra (North Florida). Both sites were naturally infested with *Hoplolaimus galeatus*, having counts exceeding existing thresholds at the beginning of the trial, although numbers were generally higher at the North Florida site. At each

site we laid out 120 4.5 ft<sup>2</sup> (0.42 m<sup>2</sup>) plots. At each site, 60 plots were untreated and 60 plots were treated with Indemnify (17.1 fl oz./A: 1.25 liters/ha) each March and October, and Divanem (12.2 fl. oz./A: 0.89 liters/ha) each May, June, July and August.

I want to point out that the nematicides were not applied in an attempt to control lance nematode, since our previous research indicated that neither Indemnify or Divanem were likely to be effective against lance nematode. Rather, we included these nematicides to see how lance nematodes respond when we effectively control other plant-parasitic nematodes and not lance nematodes.

Nematode and root samples were collected four times per year in March, June, September and October. Nematode samples were four 1.5-inch (3.8-cm)-diameter and 2.5-inches (6.4-cm)-deep plugs from each plot. Nematodes were extracted from each sample using two extraction methods, the typical soil extraction using centrifugal-flotation (Jenkins 1964), and mist extraction from turf plugs and roots (Crow et al., 2020).

The soil was knocked off of the plugs and nematodes were extracted from a 100 cm<sup>3</sup> soil subsample per plot. The four plugs with adhering roots and thatch were washed and placed in a mist chamber for 72-hours to collect lance nematodes and root-knot nematodes exiting roots. Nematodes collected from each sampling method were counted separately. Root samples were

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two 1.5-inch (3.8-cm)-diameter and 6-inches (15-cm) deep from each plot. Roots were from the two cores per plot were combined, extracted manually in water with a sieving technique and measured using WinRhizo equipment and software.

Turf measurements were collected every two weeks, except when prevented by top-dressing, hurricane, winter freeze, flood and pandemic related events. Measurements taken were turf quality (1-9), NDVI (turf stress) and Tru-Firm (hardness). Data from multiple measurements per month were averaged and the average monthly values were used for analysis. In general, turf quality and NDVI yielded very similar results and since turf quality is more readily relatable, it will be used in the discussion herein. Tru-Firm measurements did not yield useful information and will not be discussed.

**General Observations**

Lance nematode counts were generally higher at the North Florida site (Figure 1) than at the South Florida site (Figure 2). While lance nematode counts from soil started off in excess of our old “high risk” thresholds in South Florida, their numbers decreased throughout the trial. However, in North Florida the lance nematodes started off very high and remained very high throughout. Another observation from the North Florida site was that, as in previous trials, numbers of lance nematodes recovered from soil got much higher in the nematicide treated plots than in the

untreated plots. At the North Florida site there were fairly low numbers of root-knot nematode, ring nematode and a few other kinds of plant-parasitic nematodes present. However, at the South Florida site there were abundant (in excess of “high risk” thresholds) root-knot nematodes present.

In the nematicide treated plots, after reaching a high point of around 1,450 lance nematodes per cm<sup>3</sup> of soil in September 2019, their numbers trended downward for the remainder of the trial. This population reduction was likely due to a fungal parasite we observed infecting large numbers of lance nematodes in the nematicide treated plots.

By the end of the trial, an estimated 3/4 of the lance nematodes in some of the nematicide treated plots were dead and their bodies were completely filled by this fungus. When counting the lance nematodes, only live non-infected lance nematodes were included in analysis. Therefore, the total lance nematode counts likely remained fairly constant after September 2019, but the numbers of live ones capable of damaging turf steadily decreased.

Currently, the identity of this lance-nematode -killing fungus is unknown but we plan to conduct further research on it in the future. We did not observe fungal infection at the South Florida site, so this fungus is likely not the cause of decreases in lance nematode abundance at that location.

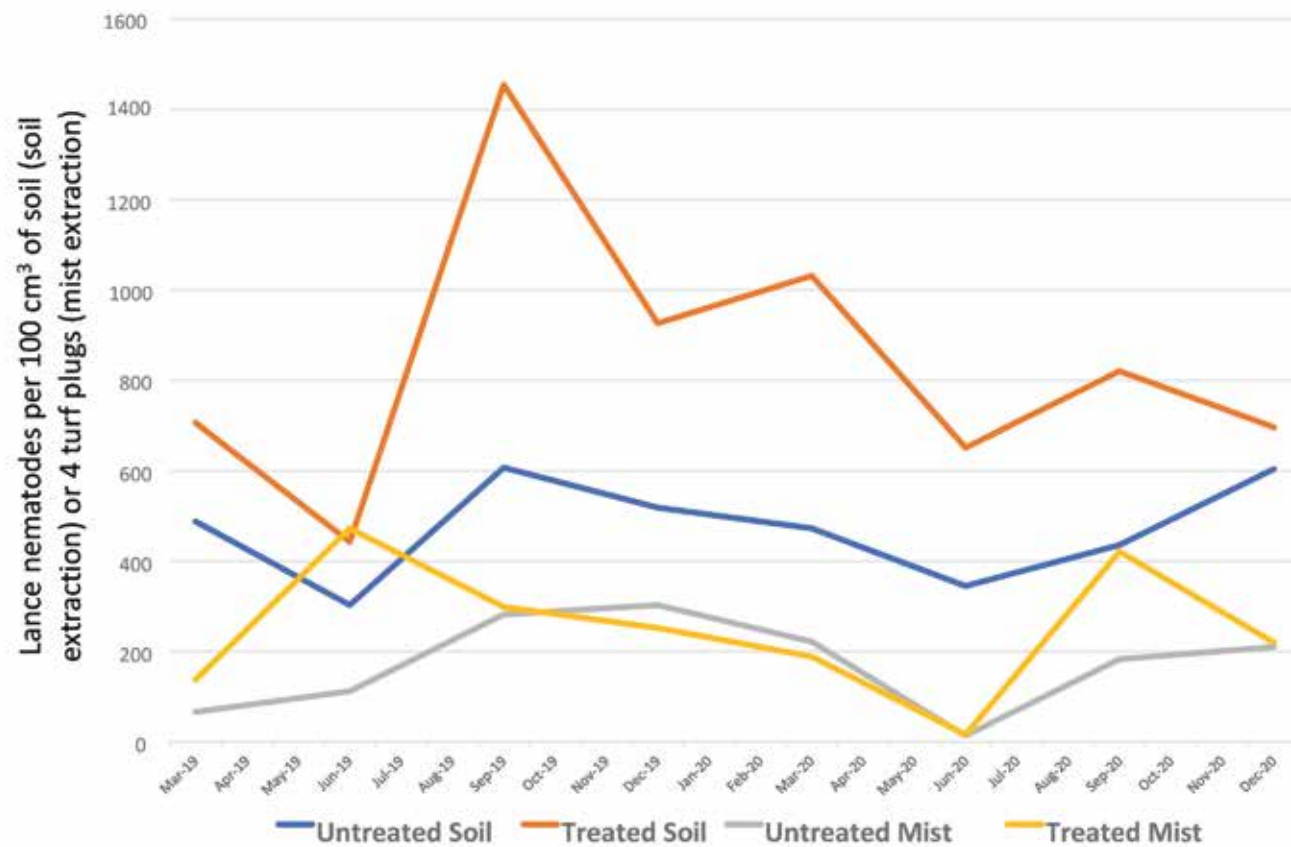


Figure 1. Average number of lance nematodes recovered by centrifugal-flotation from 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil, or by mist extraction from four 1.5-inch (3.8-mc)-diameter turf plugs over the course of the experiment at the North Florida site from 60 untreated or 60 nematicide-treated plots.

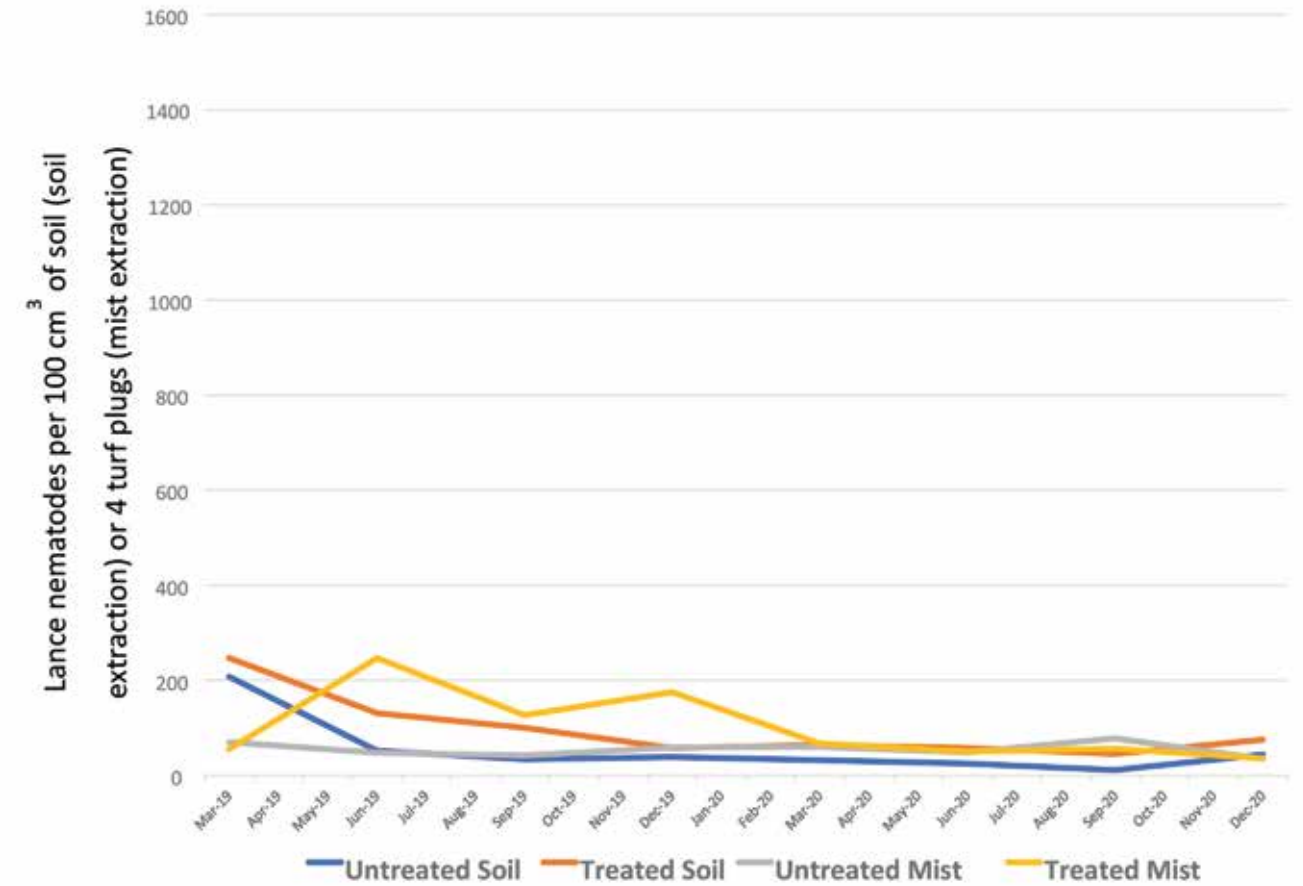


Figure 2. Average number of lance nematodes recovered by centrifugal-flotation from 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil, or by mist extraction from four 1.5-inch (3.8-mc)-diameter turf plugs over the course of the experiment at the South Florida site from 60 untreated or 60 nematicide-treated plots.

Root lengths were greater on the Sunday bermudagrass in North Florida than on the TifEagle bermudagrass in South Florida (Figure 3). Having more roots to feed on may have contributed to higher lance nematode counts in North Florida than South Florida. Turf quality was greater on the TifEagle bermudagrass in South Florida than on the Sunday bermudagrass in North Florida (Figure 4), possibly because lance nematodes were fewer at the South Florida site than at the North Florida site.


**Analysis**

To answer the research questions, we used a combination of regression analysis and observation. Monthly average turf quality for each month were regressed on the nematode counts using both extraction method, for the current and all preceding sampling dates. Similarly, turf root length at each sampling date was regressed on the lance nematode counts for the current and all preceding sampling dates.

**Sampling and Extraction**

Regression analysis was used to determine

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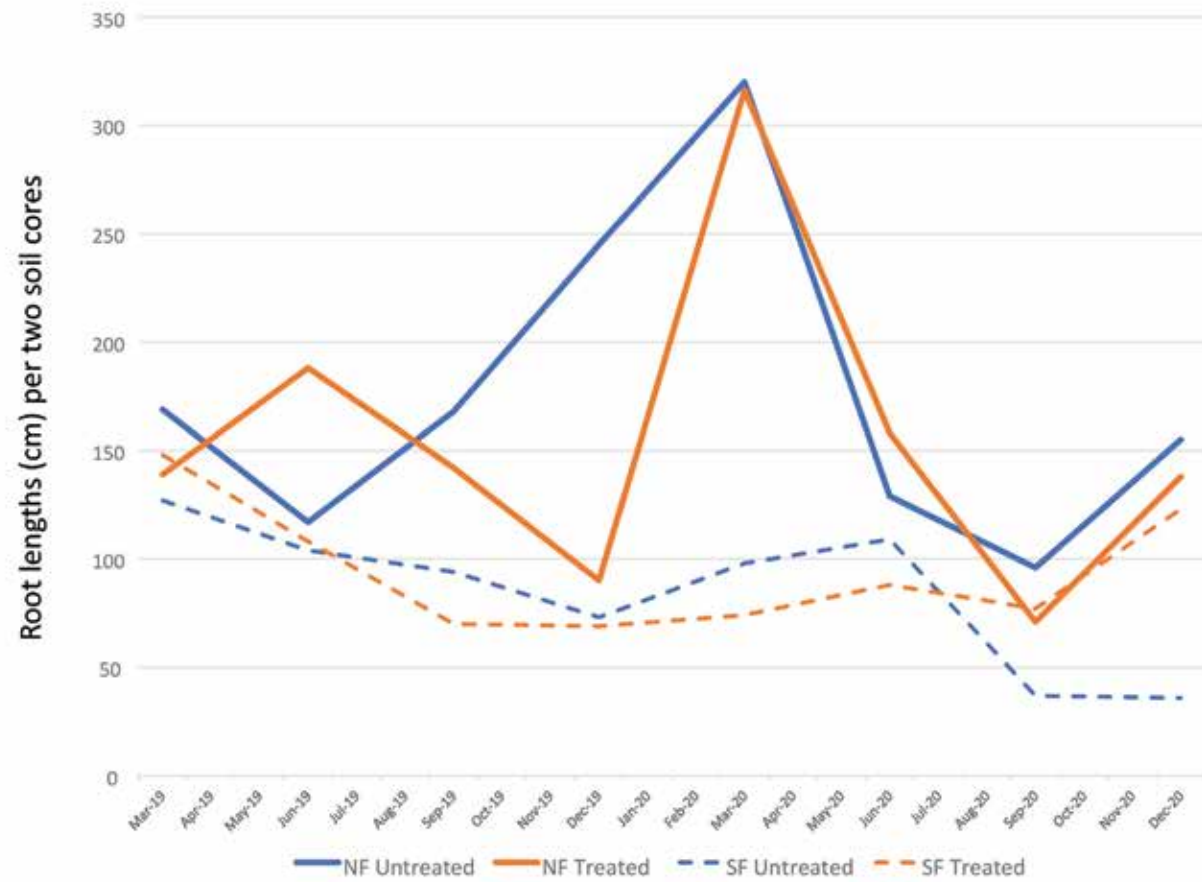


Figure 3. Average root length (cm) from two cores per plot from 60 untreated plots or 60 nematicide treated plots in North Florida and South Florida trial sites.

which extraction method was better at estimating lance nematode impacts on turf quality and root lengths. Regression analysis is used to determine how related two things are. For example: Figure 5 is the regression of turf quality at the North Florida site in July 2020 on the number of lance nematodes recovered from soil extraction in March 2020. The line slopes downward, indicating that as nematode numbers (the X-axis) increased, the turf quality (Y-axis) decreased.

The slope of the line ( $y = 0.0015x + 4.7$ ) can be used to determine the expected turf quality if no lance nematodes were present (4.7) and how many nematodes it takes for turf quality to be reduced by one full point (667 lance nematodes per 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil). The R<sup>2</sup> value tells us how much of the variability in turf quality among plots can be explained by lance nematodes (in this case 0.77 or 77 percent), the larger the number the better, one is as good as it gets. The P tells us how statistically significant the association is, the smaller the P the better,  $P < 0.0001$  is as good as it gets and anything greater than 0.1 we considered not significant. We literally ran hundreds of individual regressions, so I will not show them all here, but I will give you a summary of what we found.

Numbers of lance nematodes recovered by soil extraction were better for estimating turf quality than the number of lance nematodes recovered using mist extraction. That is not to say that the number of lance nematodes recovered by mist extraction were never useful for predicting turf quality, but significant interactions (good Ps) were not as common, and the associations (the

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R<sup>2</sup>s) were usually not as strong as from soil extraction.

The nematode counts from nematicide treated plots were better at predicting turf quality than were the counts from untreated plots. We attribute this to two factors. 1) Lance nematode counts in some of the treated plots got much higher than in the untreated plots and gave us a larger range on the X-axis. Larger X-axis ranges generally make for better regressions. 2) The nematicides provided control of other nematodes, reducing their confounding influence on turf quality and root length.

We also found that the R<sup>2</sup>s (how good the nematode counts were at predicting turf quality) generally increased for three to six months after sampling. This means that a lance nematode sample is more effective at predicting turf quality several months in the future than at estimating current damage. It is best to collect the nematode sample three to six months before you expect nematode damage to occur. From the results of this study, the best times to sample for lance nematodes in Florida (and likely anywhere from Dallas to Atlanta and South) is September and March.

#### Tolerance limit and Thresholds

A few nematodes are typically unlikely to cause damage. However, as nematode numbers increase, they get to a number where they start having a measurable negative impact. Nematologists refer to this number as the “tolerance limit.” The actual tolerance limit is unknown, it varies from green to green, from green edge

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Figure 4. Average turf quality (1/9) from 60 untreated plots or 60 nematicide treated plots in North Florida and South Florida trial sites.

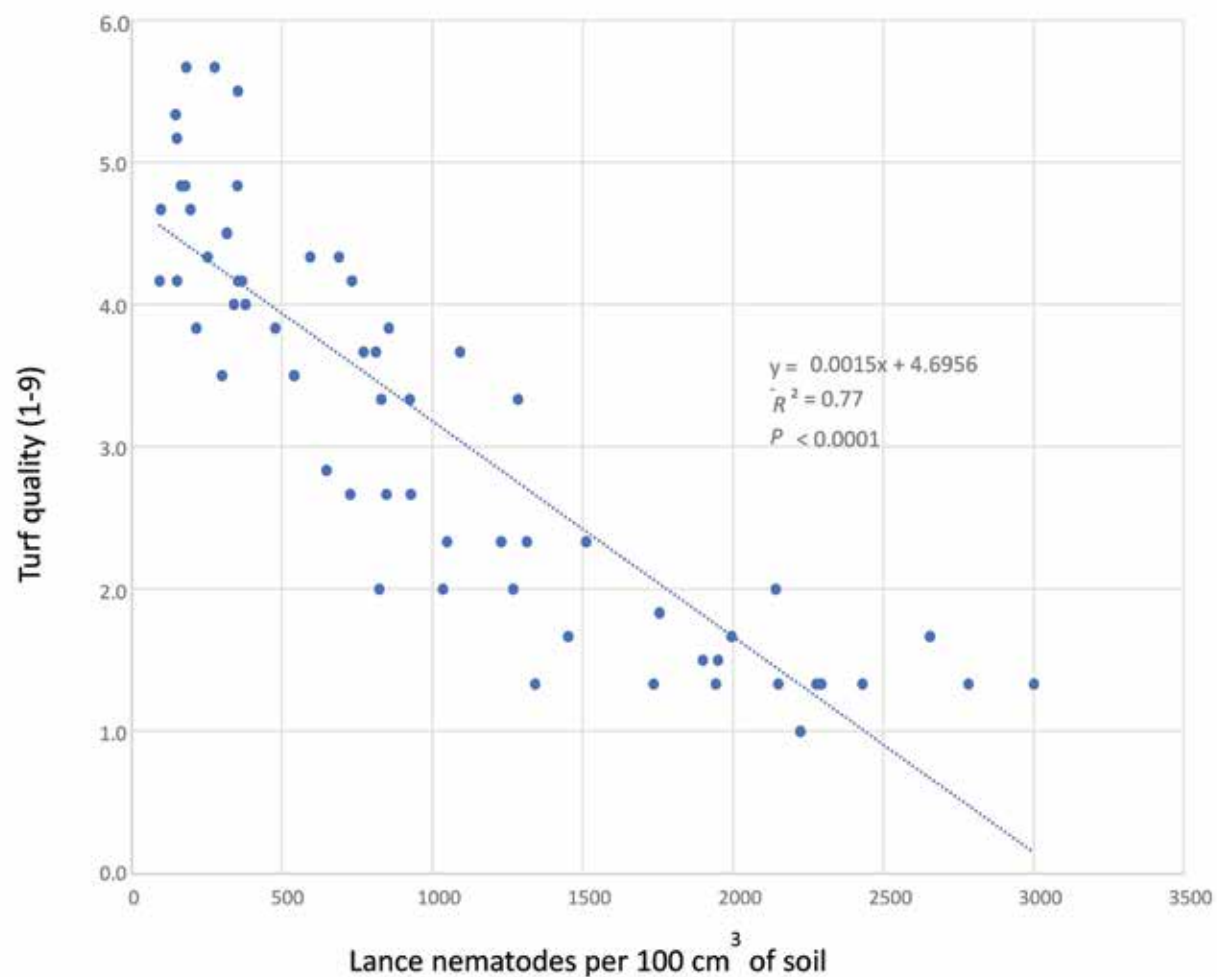


Figure 5. Linear regression of turf quality (1-9) in July 2020 on the number of lance nematodes recovered by soil extraction in March 2020 from 60 nematicide treated plots at the North Florida site.

to center, from month to month, etc. However, with enough data, we can get an estimate that it is likely to be within a given range. This range is what I use for my “moderate risk threshold.” Below this range I designate as “low risk,” and above it as “high risk.”

In this study we observed that increasing turf quality was often associated with increasing numbers of lance nematodes, up to a point. This doesn’t mean that the nematodes made the grass better, rather, it means that healthier grass provides more food for the nematodes, so their numbers increased. The grass was affecting the nematodes more than the nematodes were affecting the grass up to that point.

However, after that point, turf quality decreased with increasing numbers of lance nematodes. We believe that this was where the tolerance limit was reached. This tolerance limit was different from location to location, month to month and treated vs. untreated, but we were looking for the range that the individual tolerance limits generally fell into.

The tolerance limit is much more difficult to determine on plots where nematicides were not used, because the influence of other nematodes in the untreated plots made the data much more variable. Therefore, only the nematicide treated plots were used for determining thresholds.

For illustration, we will look at a specific example. Figure 6 shows the average turf quality of nematicide-treated plots in North Florida in July 2020 associated with the average number of lance nematodes recovered from soil and grouped in increments of 100 from March 2020. Turf quality increased with increasing numbers of lance nematodes until somewhere around 100 to 200 nematodes per 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil.

However, after that, turf quality steadily decreased with increasing nematode numbers. In this example the tolerance limit appears to be around 200 lance nematodes per 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil. Again, I am not going to show all of these graphs, but in most cases the tolerance limit appears to be around 100 to 300 lance nematodes per cm<sup>3</sup> of soil and that is what I have adopted as my moderate risk threshold.

#### Take-Home Points

They key findings and outcomes of this research are:

- 1) Both soil and mist extraction can be used to diagnose lance nematodes from bermudagrass, but soil extraction is generally better.
- 2) The old lance nematode thresholds needed revision. The new thresholds for lance nematodes on bermudagrass (and other warm-season turfgrasses) adopted in 2021 by the UF

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Nematode Assay Lab are: < 100 per 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil = low risk, 100-299 per 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil = moderate risk, and >299 per 100 cm<sup>3</sup> of soil = high risk.

- 3) It is best to sample for lance nematodes three to six months before you expect damage to occur. In most of the south, this is September and March.
- 4) Current nematicide options are generally ineffective for managing lance nematodes on golf course bermudagrass. Over-reliance on these nematicides can lead to increasing problems with lance nematodes. At this point I want to encourage the reader to not get too depressed. I have been working with some promising new nematicides for management of lance nematodes and expect some of these to become available in the next couple of years. ■

- Dr. Billy Crow is the Landscape Nematologist at the University of Florida

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Environmental Institute for Golf, now the GC-SAA Foundation, and the Florida GCSA for funding this research. Thank you also to the UF Landscape Nematology team (Chris Green, Maria Mendes, Tom Bean, Mengyi Gu, Benjamin Waldo, Matt Walkup) for all their hard work sampling, extracting nematodes, counting nematodes, processing roots, etc. Finally, appreciation to the staff at the UF Plant Science Unit (Mark Kann and his team) and the UF Ft. Lauderdale Research and Extension Center (Karen Williams and her team) for taking care of the turf plots and providing help when we needed it.

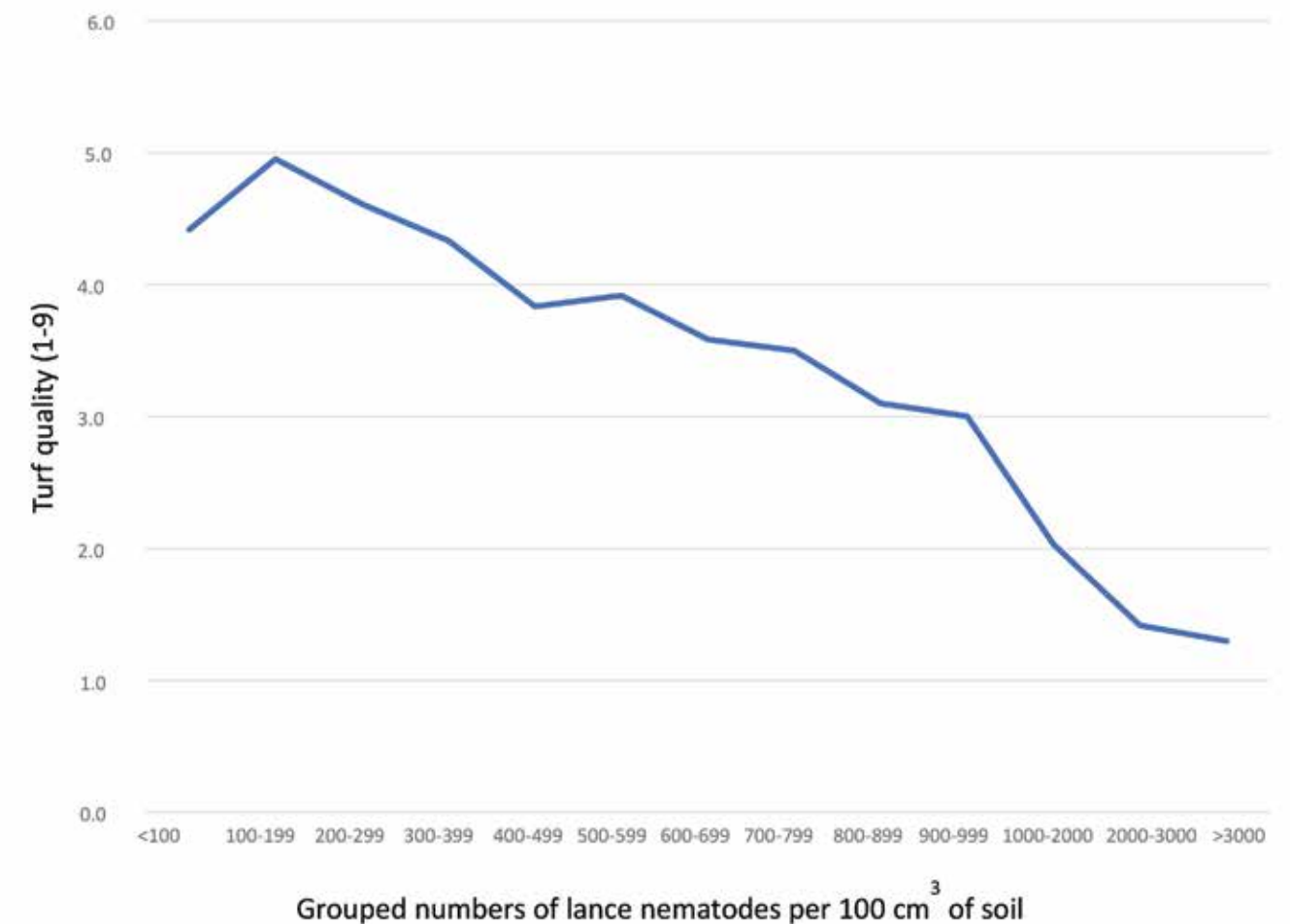


Figure 6. Average turf quality (1-9) in July 2020 related to grouped numbers of lance nematodes, recovered by soil extraction in March 2020 from 60 nematicide treated plots at the North Florida site.



*Dr. Bryan Unruh, the award-winning University of Florida researcher.*

## UF's Bryan Unruh Dedicated TO RESEARCH AND RAISING KIDS

by Cecelia Brown

**D**r. Bryan Unruh's interest in turfgrass first began when he was just a kid mowing lawns in his hometown of Dodge City, KS. His first "academic" involvement in the green industry came when he attended a lawnmower safety course taught by the county agriculture agent. Now, he is a professor of environmental horticulture at the University of Florida, IFAS, West Florida Research and Education Center in Jay.

A career in turfgrass management was never considered as Unruh finished high school with the intention to become a corporate attorney. After giving thought to the idea of a desk job and seven and a half years of study to be an attorney, he chose a different and ultimately longer route. Instead, he ended up going to school for 10 and a half years and during that time developed a greater interest in horticulture.

Between his freshman and sophomore year of undergraduate studies at Kansas State University, Unruh worked for a friend who owned one of the largest lawn care companies in western Kansas. Duties including bidding and estimating and helping run a few crews. "Then when I went back to school my sophomore year, I probably was a little too focused on the extracurricular activities," Unruh says.

During that sophomore year he realized a lot of students were going into golf course management, but he didn't have any experience with golf courses to know if he was even interested. So, one day, Unruh spoke with the local country club superintendent who lived near his parents.

"The summer before my junior year I worked on the golf course

and it really changed my life in the sense that, I'd never rake pine needles underneath a pine tree for four dollars again," Unruh jokes. "That summer I also worked installing residential irrigation systems."

He went into his junior year at Kansas State heavily focused on academics. The Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents gave him a scholarship and he used the funds to go with his advisor to the National Scientific Meeting in Anaheim, CA. This is where he was first introduced to the research realm of the turfgrass industry. He became inspired and upon returning, Unruh decided to pursue his master's from Kansas State University. From there, he went on to Iowa State for his Ph.D. and then started working at the University of Florida in January 1996.

Unruh considers himself an old-school extension specialist. He was hired initially as 70 percent teaching and 30 percent extension with no formal research appointment, even though he launched the start of building a large research facility. But he says that changed within just one year at UF, due to the changing needs of the turfgrass industry.

"I don't think you can do good extension work sitting in your office. You've got to be out of the trenches and so I started traveling around Florida," he says.

After 14 years at UF, he passed the baton in the teaching program and became fully committed to UF's turfgrass research efforts and is now a senior faculty member, which he says sounds better than being called the "old guy at UF"

"The problems are increasingly complex. We, as practitioners, tend to want to simplify things but Earth is an amazingly complex system," he says. "I guess probably the last decade of my work has really been trying to parse out the inner workings and relations."

Unruh explains that what started as looking into what fertilizer lasts the longest quickly became a realization of determining the environmental impacts of fertilization.

"We're quick to say grass is good for the environment. It has a lot of ecosystem services, a lot of attributes when properly managed and that is the crux of it," Unruh says. "We're dealing with everything from your average homeowner who thinks a little bit (of fertilizer) is good and a lot of it would be better. All the way to the corporate companies that want to try a one size fits all approach."

Unruh says that he loves that no two days are the same in his position. One day he'll be in a suit and tie in Washington, D.C. speaking to the administrator of the EPA and the next, he'll be in work boots laying sod.

"That's pretty enjoyable. I'm a problem solver so you can send me a picture of something but it's not really the same as digging in and trying to figure out the solution to the challenge," he says.

In 2000, a discussion on restricting fertilizer in Jacksonville led

to a conversation with Unruh and a former department chair which birthed the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the green industry. In September 2000, they launched the first effort to build the Florida Green Industry BMP for the lawn care side of the business and worked on that until around 2003.

"That's where it all started. BMPs became required by law. So, in order to spread fertilizer in the State of Florida, to the urban landscape, you have to be licensed and in order to be licensed, you have to go through BMP training. Once the lawn care BMPs were complete, the golf side started ramping up," he says. After that came sod production BMPs.

Unruh's turfgrass science research and extension program is at the forefront of improving BMPs, understanding and changing consumer preferences and behavior related to landscape management and testing new and novel grasses that have improved turfgrass performance characteristics and require fewer inputs to maintain them. Results from his team's work are included in all three Florida turf industry BMP manuals.

Unruh's team was selected to develop GCSAA's national BMP Planning Guide and Template with the end goal of having golf-centric BMP manuals in all 50 states by 2020; a goal that was achieved in December 2020.

Unruh explains that was the first phase and phase two is getting

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a BMP manual developed for every golf course in every state. Essentially, individual golf course superintendents can now log into the facility portal and, based on their location, will be able to adapt the state-level document for their facility.

“In the facility tool, superintendents can personalize the content accounting for city or county rules or regulations that need to be incorporated into the BMPs. They can put a picture of their signature hole from their golf course onto their cover. The next heavy lift is going to try to get these manuals all over the nation for every facility which will take some time,” he says.

In 2009, the Florida Turfgrass Association gave Unruh their Wreath of Grass Award. “With that one, I was absolutely speechless because it was done in secret. Those awards are just real affirmation that I’m effective. We get really caught up in being busy and busy doesn’t always mean effective,” he says.

Unruh was awarded the 2018 Turfgrass Educator Award of Excellence from Turfgrass Producers International. Betsy McGill, Executive Director of Turfgrass Producers of Florida nominated him and several allied golf and sod organizations wrote letters supporting his nomination. “It was pretty cool and it was humbling,” Unruh says.

In 2020, Unruh was selected as a Fellow for both the American Society of Agronomy and the Crop Science Society of America.

“That is the highest recognition bestowed by the professional societies. That’s my colleagues and my peers recognizing my contributions rather than by groups that I support,” Unruh says. A panel reviews nominations and selects worthy colleagues based on their professional achievements and meritorious service. Up to 0.3 percent of the Society’s active and emeritus members may be elected Fellow.

Unruh is also immediate past-chair of the Crop Science Society of America C5 Division, the turfgrass science division.

The same research meeting Unruh attended on scholarship in 1988, he attended again in 2019 where he was elected the division chair. In that role, he was responsible for planning and organizing the annual research conference. Due to COVID, the 2020 conference planned in Phoenix, AZ ended up being held virtually.

“I was the chair during the pandemic. The year that I was the chair was the same year I received the two fellows, so it was a high watermark,” he says.

Unruh says that he loves the connections he shares with others involved in the turfgrass industry, whether it’s projects they’re working on or keeping up with each other’s families. “We’re a pretty tight-knit group which has its pros and cons. We’re kind of all focused on this thing, turf, in collaboration. We are colleagues and we’re friends. And it’s really kind of cool,” he says.

Unruh and his wife Barbara have been happily married for 30 years. The two met in high school and now have two grown

children, Joshua and Jordan, as well as an adopted son, Josiah. He explains Barbara is wired to help people in need and several years ago they formed a not-for-profit called Hope for the Future of Northwest Florida. The organization is geared towards helping those who are homeless, or at risk of being homeless; especially single mothers and elderly women.

At the time they started this up, Unruh was also serving on the State Board for the Florida Baptist Convention, which has a subsidiary called the Florida Baptist Children’s Home. At their board meetings, Unruh would hear about the need for foster parents and group homes. The Unruhs decided that they would go through the training to become foster parents.

Just 45 minutes after receiving their license, their phone rang, and the agency asked if they could take a newborn that was at the hospital. Barbara went and brought home a 3lb 4oz baby boy. Unruh says the first few months were scary due to the baby’s size. “Josiah turned nine years old recently. He is crazy smart and athletic. He changed our world and we have changed his world too,” Unruh says.

Unruh and Barbara fostered for six years altogether, during which they cared for 22 children up to the age of 17. Some stayed less than 24 hours, while others stayed for over a year.

Quite rightly, Unruh is admired by many in the turfgrass industry for his dedication to research and extension. ■

- Cecilia Brown is media and content manager for Sod Solutions.



The dad, Bryan Unruh, with adopted son Josiah.

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*Kyle Sweet in action at the 2020 Golf Industry Show in Orlando with University of Florida's Dr. Bryan Unruh watching on.*

# Golf Course Maintenance Standards CAN BE YOUR RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

*by Kyle Sweet, CGCS*

As usual, I'm sitting in front of the computer with about a thousand ideas about what to write but getting them organized is another story. I'm wondering how it could be that my deadline is today, and I haven't been able to carve out enough time to get my article in over the past two months.

Yeah, I've been busy at work and home, but who hasn't. Talking to you all out in the industry, I think there is a feeling of needing to "catch up" from the delays that were caused in our industry over the past year and undoubtedly that feeling makes us work more and more. I don't know if we'll catch up or not this summer, but we're all certainly trying.

Whether it's at home or work, which by the way are equally important, keeping up yet alone catching up takes a ton of effort all year-round. Three words quickly come to mind that I believe are key. Organization, prioritization and expectation are the three that if understood and well implemented can work together to keep you successful and moving ahead in our business.

Realizing this several years ago, amidst failing to keep up in many ways on my course, I decided to put a plan to work that would

both help me organize my operational programs and prioritize what really is important for the golf course, members and the staff. Combined with customer or member expectations, this plan is often referred to as golf course maintenance standards and is a document that I would encourage everyone to create.

Okay, I know, I hear it now, "C'mon Kyle one more thing to do in the office when I really want to do is be on the course." I have to agree with that thinking to a degree but believe me, once you get these on paper it might actually help you spend more time on the course, doing the things that you are striving to achieve in the standards.

So, what are standards? As defined in our case they are "a level of quality or attainment" and can basically be applied to every area of your operation. A standard could be something as simple as moving tee markers every day or as involved as updating your annual hurricane plan or certifying all staff in first aid and CPR each year. Seriously, the sky is limit.

What will you learn when you create standards? That is easy. You will learn that you know one helluva lot and are probably respon-

sible for more than you think about most days. In no time, you could create a list like this, I'm sure:

- Golf Course Maintenance Standards Areas
- Greens
- Tees
- Fairways
- Roughs
- Course service/setup
- Bunkers/waste areas
- Golf course landscaping
- Cart paths
- Golf course natural areas
- Clubhouse landscaping
- Chemical and fertilizer applications
- Irrigation management
- Safety/legal/environmental standards

That's a decent list and I bet that you can come up with many more areas that you work on to create a certain level of quality or attain a certain goal with your work.

Okay, like anything else, the hardest part is getting started. I would recommend start with greens and start with the basics. How about something like this...

Greens are to be smooth, firm, weed-free and be maintained at a green speed of 10ft. to 11ft. from November – May and 8.5ft. to 9.5ft. from May – October, excluding periods when impacted by aerification.

That is my first standard and from there you move along to the work that it will take to achieve that standard. Mowing consistency, roller use, aerification and topdressing methods, soil testing, consulting programs, etc. It's all in there and with an annual review of the standards it can easily be adjusted.

Of course, it's always our goal to increase our standards and do a better job for our golfers but sometimes we are asked to reduce inputs that might affect the standard that has been created and agreed upon at your course. Agreed upon by who, you're asking? Well, that depends on each operation, but it is typically a green committee, general manager or course owner.

With standards in place, it's a whole different conversation when faced with requests or demands to reduce inputs that might affect your ability to achieve your set standards. You've worked to create the standard, you work to maintain the standard and, with the documentation of the standard, you will be able to protect your ability to achieve what's needed for your golfers and customers.

Let's go back to the beginning. Organization and

prioritization were two big keys to success and those two combined with expectations from your golfers give you a great reason to create some golf course maintenance standards. In the end, whether they are just a page or a large, comprehensive document, they will be useful.

You'll undoubtedly be more organized in your programs, will know where best to spend your time and money, and will be on the same page with your committees, general manager or owner on what your course conditions need to be. In the end, it's your recipe for success and the ability to spend many more days out there on the course doing what you love to do!

My standards are available to anyone, and I will gladly share upon request. You can email me at [ksweet@sanctuarygc.net](mailto:ksweet@sanctuarygc.net). Have a great summer and I hope all your preparations for the upcoming Florida golf season go well for you and your facility. ■

*- Kyle Sweet is certified golf course superintendent at The Sanctuary Golf Club in Sanibel.*

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# IN THE NEWS



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

## Pat O'Brien Panama Country Club

Panama City News Herald, April 30

It is Sherman Week. For those who don't know what that means or can't guess, head up to the Panama Country Club in Lynn Haven today and watch 176 golfers tee off for the three-day Sherman Invitational and return Sunday afternoon for the traditional gallery following of the leaders playing the final nine holes.

Odds are visitors might see an upcoming PGA tour winner... Because the Sherman Invitational, in its 94th annual tournament since it began in 1927, is one of the 10 oldest invitationals in the country and is considered the longest-running in the Southeast, having missed only three years — 1943-45 during World War II.

And even more special this year, the tournament is back to its historical date of the first weekend in May after being delayed until the fall in 2019 due to Hurricane Michael damage and until last fall for 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Aside from World War II, nothing else has come close to shutting down the tournament until Hurricane Michael hit in 2018, followed by the pandemic in 2020.

The Category 5 hurricane destroyed the golf course and many of the homes and trees around it.

There was no way the course, which was destroyed, could be ready by the first weekend in May 2019, but golf course superintendent Pat O'Brien and his staff managed to have it ready for a fall tournament in 2019, a remarkable feat.

"There are two components: aesthetics and the playing of the course, the playability," Charlie Commander, an avid supporter of the tournament who has played the course since he was a child, said. "What Pat O'Brien and his staff have done is off the charts. They went after the conditions of the tee boxes, the fairways and the greens, the things you have to have right and let aesthetics wait a bit.

"The same love we have for the Sherman, we also have for the golf course and this area. I believe there are very few golf courses that would've ever opened back up again after the hurricane with this kind of damage if not for the board of Panama Country Club and Pat O'Brien and his staff."

## Ryan Sherbert Tiburon Golf Club

Naples Daily News, April 12

Instead of going for the Gold, tour golfers are betting on the Black this week at Tiburon Golf Club at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort. The PGA Tour Champions Chubb Classic presented by SERVPRO will be played on the club's Black Course, the first time it has been used for a tour event. The Gold Course, the original of the two Greg Norman layouts, has been used for every QBE Shoot-out since 2001, and also for the LPGA Tour's CME Group Tour Championship since 2013.

"Tiburon is proud to host three professional events in Naples," Tiburon Golf Club general manager Kevin DeDonato said. "This could not be done without the hard work and dedication of our entire team. Putting our facility on the national stage three times in the last five months is quite an honor and we could not do this without the great support of our partners at Troon, Wasserman, Eiger, Ritz, and many others.

"It's a pretty exciting opportunity for Tiburon," Black Course superintendent Ryan Sherbert said. "Myself and the crew are really excited to show off the product that we're able to provide here."

It underwent a massive renovation in 2018, undergoing extensive greens, turf, irrigation and bunker renovations. Green surrounds and approaches were reconfigured and also regrassed with Celebration bermudagrass. Greens are TifEagle bermudagrass.

"This is a little bit tougher course," said Sherbert, who has been at Tiburon for 10 years and the Black Course superintendent for five. "We tried to make it a little more player friendly, moving some of the tees so they had a better view of the fairways, making bunkers smaller, and adding some rough."

Sherbert and the crew - there are 45 who work both courses - have been doing some tidying up of the Black to get it ready for tour golf - and TV. "We still had some (Hurricane) Irma cleanup on the edges of the fairways so we've been working on that, trimming here and there, where play might go," he said. "Other than that, it's kind of normal setup for what we hope to provide day-to-day for a PGA-level course. There's definitely a lot more attention to detail."

All of that work will be before the eyes of a national cable television audience starting Friday. "It's going to be neat to be able to see it with the crew," Sherbert said. "We'll be there in the afternoon watching. I'll probably be speechless. Just seeing their reactions will be cool."

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**Harrell Honored with Marie Roberts Award**

Harrell's, CEO Jack Harrell, Jr. was formally honored with the Florida GCSA Marie Roberts Lifetime Service Award at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club in May. The award is presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to the Florida GCSA and the golf industry through participation, support and achievements in the industry.

Harrell has been a prominent member of the golf community in Florida and the GCSAA for many years, continually showing commitment through Harrell's by providing financial support, ongoing educational support for industry members and representing the entire industry through government relations work.

Harrell joins a prestigious list of individuals dating back to the inaugural award in 2005. While the award is relatively new, being presented with it is no small feat as each individual has dedicated their career to the industry. "It's an honor to receive this award and be amongst the prestigious list of previous recipients," Harrell says. "I love this industry; I was raised into it from a young age, and it holds a special place in my heart. But I wouldn't be here today without the support and dedication of the Harrell's team. They make everything possible, every day, across all of our locations."

Harrell was also recently selected to join the class of 2020's induction into the Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame. The purpose of the induction is to "recognize exceptional individuals who've distinguished themselves through their contributions to the Tampa Bay community."



Everglades GCSA director Matt Taylor, left, from Royal Poinciana Golf Club and president Cisco Navas, right, from Cypress Woods Golf and Country Club present the Marie Roberts Lifetime Service Award to Jack Harrell, Jr.



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## Business Institute To Stay Online

Applications are open for this year's Syngenta Business Institute, to be hosted virtually from December 6 to 10. Applications are open online at [www.greencastonline.com](http://www.greencastonline.com) until September 2. The decision to go virtual another year was "Based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the SBI class of 2020 and with the health and safety of our customers," says Stephanie Schwenke, turf market manager for Syngenta.



This year's program will increase to 15 class hours in response to requests from attendees in 2020. Courses will be hosted in three-hour sessions Monday through Friday with the curriculum presented by faculty from Wake Forest University School of Business. Education will cover work and life balance, negotiating, financial management, tools for managing employees and how to lead across cultural and generational lines.

The program is only open to individuals employed in the U.S. as a superintendent, director of agronomy or equivalent position. To be considered, candidates must fill out an application, which includes a short essay on why they should be chosen to attend. Selected participants will be notified in October.

## Florida Gateway Seeks Program Ambassadors

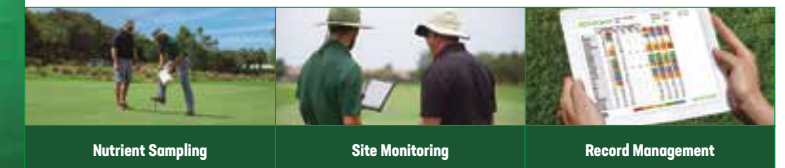
Florida Gateway College is currently seeking volunteer ambassadors. The goal is to obtain an ambassador from each state chapter. Ambassadors do not need to be alumni but simply someone with a passion to communicate the value of Florida Gateway turfgrass-related programs and help build the student base. Volunteers will work closely with the advisory council and college faculty to promote programs through quarterly conference calls and a yearly ambassador golf outing.

Anyone interested can contact David H. Robinson, CGCS at [david.robinson@marriottgolf.com](mailto:david.robinson@marriottgolf.com) or (407) 256-4173.



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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Give Back Checks Come to Florida

FMC's Give Back program sent nearly \$1,000 to chapters in Florida. Nationally, chapters earned awards totaling \$25,000 from participating in 2021 Golf Industry Show activities tied to FMC's Kalida Fungicide launch earlier this year.

"We strive to support local chapters who can benefit in various ways from the support," says FMC golf and lawn care market manager, Evan Parenti. "To see the FMC donations fostering educational initiatives is especially rewarding as that knowledge only makes the industry better and stronger."

In addition to the Florida GCSA, other chapters to receive checks were Florida West Coast GCSA, Everglades GCSA, Calusa GCSA and Suncoast GCSA.

### EIFG Returns Name to GCSAA Foundation

The Environmental Institute for Golf, which now administers Rounds 4 Research, has returned to its former name as the GCSAA Foundation. The organization was founded as the philanthropic organization of GCSAA in 1955 with the title of GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund. It was the GCSAA Foundation from 1995 to 2003 when it became known as the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG).

GCSAA change the name back recently believing it better reflected the scope of the organization which now runs programming for STEM education, grassroots advocacy and professional development opportunities, as well as Rounds 4 Research.

"The return to the GCSAA Foundation name will continue the success of the EIFG in fostering golf course sustainability and supporting programs," GCSAA chief executive officer Rhett Evans says. "We have made huge strides in the last 20 years, and the GCSAA Foundation name better defines support of all current programs and potential future programs while making the tie to GCSAA and our members clear. As the GCSAA Foundation, we can build on our strong tradition and solid future."

The GCSAA Foundation remains committed to environmental stewardship and will continue to further the successes of the EIFG on the environmental front. Environmental programs will be one of the five pillars of the GCSAA Foundation - the others being advocacy, research, education and scholarships. The many programs that the GCSAA Foundation supports include The First Green, GCSAA Grassroots Ambassadors, professional development opportunities, Rounds4Research and the GCSAA Disaster Relief Fund.


## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Harrell's Names New Director of Agronomy

Dr. Paul Giordano has joined Harrell's as a new director of agronomy. Dr. Giordano has been involved in the turfgrass industry for over 18 years, in basic and applied turfgrass research while working with both public and private golf clubs. After earning a bachelor of science degree in crop and soil sciences, he went on to earn his master's degree, focusing on plant pathology, and a Ph.D. in plant, soil, and microbial sciences from Michigan State University. After earning his doctorate, Dr. Giordano worked for Bayer Environmental Science in Canada.

"We are excited to add Dr. Paul Giordano to our R&D team," says Jack Harrell III. "He brings a wealth of industry knowledge and will be a perfect fit to accompany Dr. Raymond Snyder and Dr. Jeff Atkinson. We have one Ph.D. whose background is in fertility, one Ph.D. whose background is in weed science and now with Paul, we have a Ph.D. whose background is in plant pathology."

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# NEW MEMBERS

## Welcome New Members

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

**Clay Batson, Class A,** Golf course superintendent, The Ritz-Carlton Members Club, Bradenton

**Anthony Brown, Retired,** UF/IFAS, Citra

**Steve Connally, Affiliate,** Diamond R Fertilizer, Fort Pierce

**John Crocker, Class B,** Golf course superintendent, Swiss Golf Course, Clermont

**Mike Dague, Class C,** Assistant golf course superintendent, Winter Park Golf Course, Winter Park

**Corey Edwards, Class C,** Assistant golf course superintendent, Lake Nona Golf & Country Club, Orlando

**Steven Ellison Jr., Class A,** Golf course superintendent, Brown Golf Management

**Romualdo Flores, Class A,** Golf course superintendent, Brown Golf Management, Ocala

**Robert Harris, Class C,** Assistant golf course superintendent, Gasparilla Inn, Boca Grande

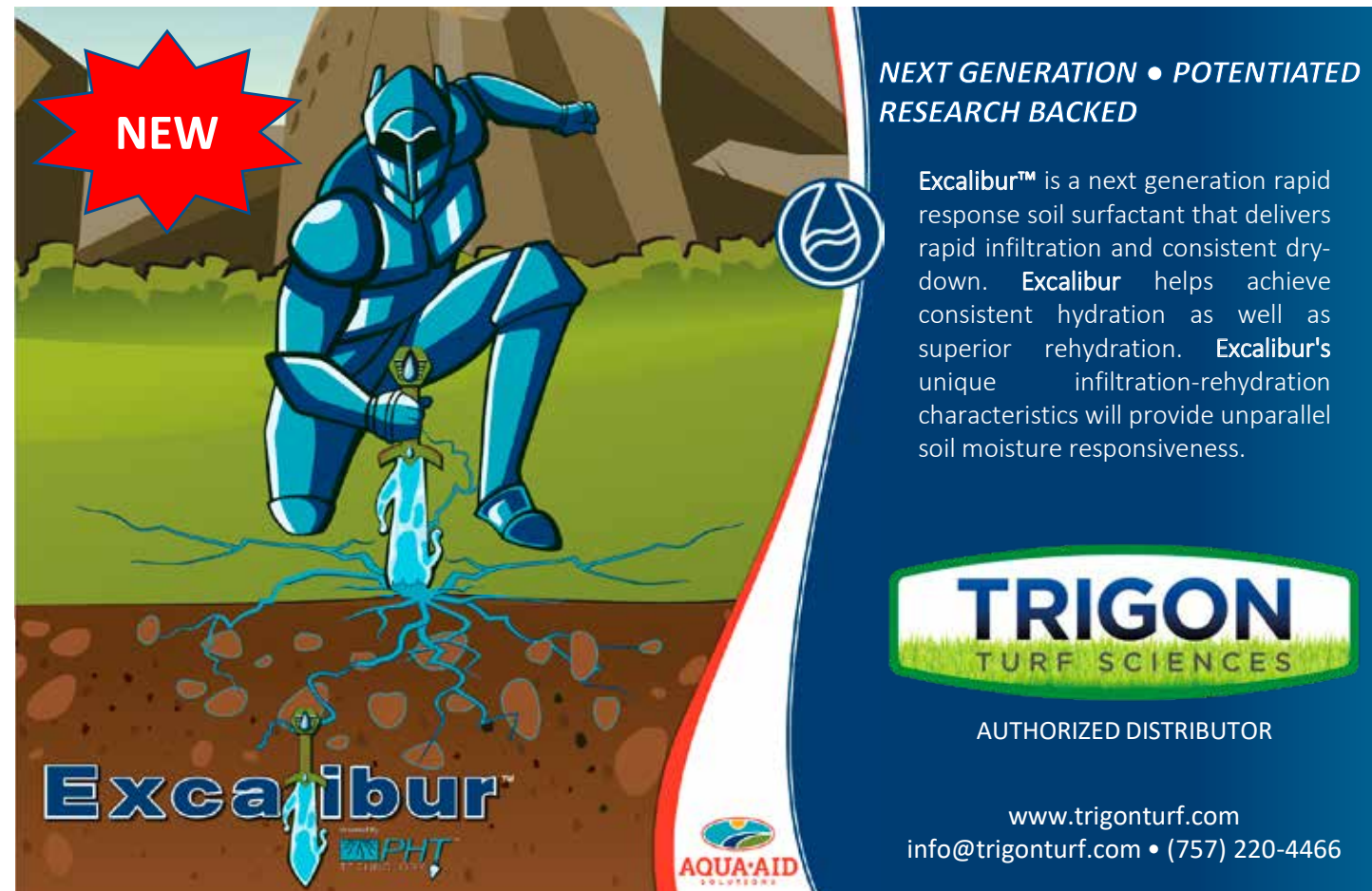
**Raymond Lowe, Class C,** Assistant golf course superintendent, High Ridge Country Club, Lakeworth

**John McCarthy, Class A,** Golf course superintendent, TPC Sawgrass, Ponte Vedra Beach

**Ryan Nelson, Class C,** Assistant golf course superintendent, Spring Run Golf Club, Bonita Springs

**Adam Stewart, Class B,** Golf course superintendent, Down 2 Earth Inc.

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



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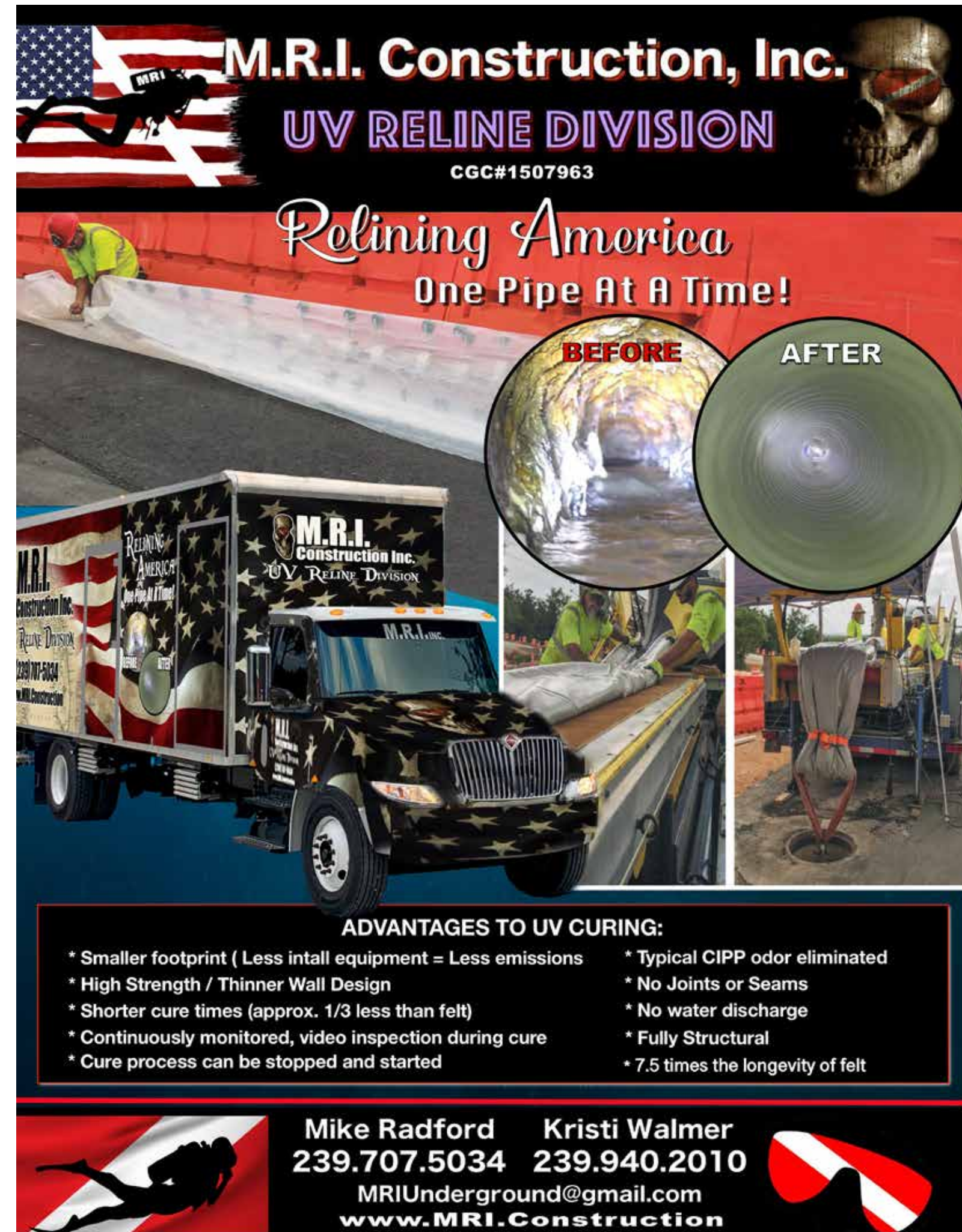
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## GCSAA's Board Orientation Session Helps Advance Chapters and Leaders

The first time you served on a chapter board, did you fully comprehend what your role would be or did you wonder what you had gotten yourself into? Many individuals experience some degree of angst when they start down the road of chapter leadership.

GCSAA now has an orientation program that helps alleviate the anxiety and provide a framework for successful leadership at the board level. GCSAA has developed strategies that can be used to bring your board closer and enhance relationships, creating a better understanding of how each board member relates to one another. Successful chapters have strong leaders because successful chapters know how to work with one another.

GCSAA's chapter board orientation with GCSAA director of chapter outreach Steve Randall will walk you through the steps necessary to become an effective leader. It identifies key areas of focus related to governance, financials, the relationship between your chapter and GCSAA and teamwork. Gaining an understanding of these key points helps you achieve the goals and mission of the chapter.

The board orientation has been successfully paired with GCSAA's strategic planning sessions, and many chapters have already enjoyed the benefit of participating in these proceedings.

"The Palm Beach GCSA has greatly benefited from the strategic planning sessions and board orientation services provided by GCSAA," Ryan Swilley, Palm Beach GCSA president, says. "Our board has grown and matured immensely as a result. We have been successful at capitalizing on the top opportunities that were strengthened by the valuable exercises Steve Randall and Ralph Dain guided us through. The Palm Beach GCSA is more focused and driven than ever before. I highly recommend the utilization of these services to promote the viability, mission and vision of your local chapter."

The Gulf Coast GCSA had a similar experience.

"It was a pleasure to work with Steve Randall and Ralph Dain during the Gulf Coast GCSA's most recent board orientation and strategic planning session," Amanda Miles, executive director of the Gulf Coast GCSA, says.

"Steve and Ralph facilitated our meeting in a welcoming and fun fashion that encouraged participation and dialogue. A greater sense of commitment to our chapter as board members and executive director was truly apparent by the end of the session, as well as a stronger connection to our GCSAA representatives. With GCSAA's assistance, our board of directors



*Palm Beach GCSA board members work through an orientation session led by GCSAA staffers.*

developed a clear plan for our chapter with attainable goals to add value and services to our association's members."

In addition, the Florida West Coast GCSA recommends the program.

"Our chapter board gained an awareness of each other's experiences and personalities as well as established a level of trust through the GCSAA board orientation process that will allow the Florida West Coast GCSA to work as a team to meet the challenges of the future," Florida West Coast GCSA immediate past-president and current Florida GCSA president, Andy Neiswender, says.

"We defined our roles on the board and identified goals that will enhance our ability to serve the members of the chapter. In the current times, it is important to have clearly identified our mission and goals and how we should work as a board to achieve them. We successfully accomplished this during our GCSAA board orientation and strategic planning session. I would recommend all chapters undertake this exercise."

To schedule a board orientation session for your chapter, email Steve Randall at [strandall@gcsaa.org](mailto:strandall@gcsaa.org) or me at [rdain@gcsaa.org](mailto:rdain@gcsaa.org). We'd be more than happy to help. ■

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

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