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THROW A KILLER LAWN PARTY.



Working with George was a unique experience... I mean, we would build a tee, grass it, and then George would say, 'Nope! Move it three feet to the left!'

"During my OJT summers, I worked at Harbour Town Golf Links on Hilton Head, S.C. I was assigned as club liaison to work with the PGA Tour tournament, the Heritage Classic. This gave me great experience with tournament prep and TV and PGA operations.

"After I graduated, I returned to Hilton Head and worked a second time with the tournament. This time turned out to be a big turning point in my career. Pete Sesso, the senior advance man for the Tour asked me if I would be interested in taking a job with a friend of his in Florida.

"I said sure!

"Next thing I know he's calling George Fazio and I'm headed to Jupiter Hills Golf Club. Of course I didn't know that I was the 75th superintendent they had! Working with George was a unique experience and I tried to get into his head and see how he was looking at hole layouts. I mean, we would build a tee, grass it, and then, George would say, 'Nope! Move it three feet to the left!'

"While I was at Jupiter Hills, I met Carl Smith. Carl was the superintendent at Palm Beach Country Club at the time,

but he also consulted for George at Jupiter Hills. As our friendship grew, Carl asked me if I would be willing to become his assistant at Palm Beach Country Club.

"He said he would be retiring in a few years and he wanted someone he could groom for the position, if he was willing to serve this apprenticeship so to speak. I agreed, and in 1980 I began my association with the club.

"Carl did retire as planned, and in April, 1982, I became the head superintendent. Those two and a half years with Carl were like a father passing down the family history to a son. He taught me what I needed to know to serve the club. He didn't preach to me and just tell me everything. I had to ask the questions. And when he answered, his wealth of knowledge enlightened me to the real world of turf management."

Paul continued, "Working here has been great! I've had a lot of fun and satisfaction from helping to make improvements to the course, but it is the friendly atmosphere that keeps you really going and enjoying what you do.

"At the club, our pro is a 30-year



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The 18th green, with the clubhouse in the background, presents a tranquil setting for a finishing hole from this vantage point.

**...it may even
become a crisis... I
think we may be
pumping out too
many turf
students right into
superintendent
positions.**

veteran, as is the bartender, the locker room attendant, the doorman, and on my crew I have 25- and 20-year veterans. There's a reason for that! It is the way everyone is treated and greeted, like a big family. We have problems that come up, but they are brought to my attention quickly and professionally and they are solved the same way.

"There are no hidden agendas here, and I really appreciate that fact.

"As for my staff, I can't say enough for their efforts and loyalty. I want to give special mention to some of my senior veterans; my assistant Paul Szlasa, Joe Kochis, a Penn State graduate, Alfred Mullins, and our equipment manager, Ron Payete. They make it happen and they allow me the freedom to be involved in the association. I know I can rely on them when I must be away.

"This is the time of year when all the guys start getting excited again. The sum-

mer is laid back. We have projects. It's hot. The routines are different. We mow with different equipment at different heights of cut. There's hardly anyone around to see their handiwork. Now, we're getting ready for the fall season."

As we returned to Paul's office, our conversation turned to his role as the current president of the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association and his views on the industry in general.

"There is one thing that really bothers me and it may even become a crisis to the integrity of our profession. I think we may be pumping out too many turf students that are heading right into superintendent positions.

"Every profession, from attorney to plumber, has a journeyman phase where the person serves an apprenticeship to really learn his trade. They spend long periods of time, not just a summer, at the elbow of the master craftsman learning

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Palm Beach Country Club

Location: Palm Beach Florida

Ownership: Membership

Management: General Manager, Roberto Milanese; Golf Professional, Bobby Benson; Club President, Sidney Jacobson; Greens Chairman, Mike Stein.

Playing Policies: Members and guests of members.

Designed by: Donald Ross

Opened: 1917

Number of holes: 18

Turf: 90 acres under maintenance.

Greens: 3 acres. Tifdwarf hybrid bermudagrass. Height of cut-1/8" to 3/16" with walking mowers. Overseeding-3# Pennlinks Bentgrass and 3# Cypress Poa trivialis per 1,000 sq. ft.

Tees: 2 acres in Tifway 419 hybrid bermudagrass. Height of cut-3/8" to 1/2". Overseeding - None

Fairways: 22 acres in Tifway 419 hybrid bermudagrass. Height of cut-1/2" to 5/8". Overseeding - None

Roughs: 63 acres in Tifway 419 hybrid bermudagrass. Height of cut-1 1/2". Overseeding-None

Irrigation system: Network 8000 with a Synchro-Flo Variable Speed Pump Station.

Staff: Assistant Superintendent, Paul Szlasa; Crew-10 November to May, 12 May through October.

Turf equipment: 6 John Deere walking mowers, 2 Toro Greensmasters, 1 Toro Parkmaster, 1 Toro 223-D, 1 Toro 450-D, 1 Toro 72" Groundskeeper, 1 Toro Hydroject aerifier, 2 Toro Rake-o-vacs, 1 Olathe riding sweeper, 3 Ford 3910 tractors, 1 300 gal. FMC-John Beam sprayer, 1 150 gal. Hahn Multi-pro sprayer, 5 Club Car Carryall utility vehicles, 3 Daihatsu Lift-tippers

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the trade. Over that span of time, they can learn how difficult problems and situations can be addressed and solved with planning, discipline and charity. They can learn how to communicate with superiors and subordinates in the chain of command.

Growing grass is the easiest part of our jobs most of the time. It's dealing with the curve balls that life throws at you that are the real challenges, and it takes time and experience to develop the finesse necessary to handle those challenges professionally. So I don't think it's too much to ask for a superintendent to spend years on a crew or as an assistant before he assumes the role as a superintendent. It helps keep the profession sound and the image intact.

"I must also express a concern over the direction some of the new golf management companies seem to be heading. I will say this: there are a few very good

companies that hold the superintendent in high regard and make him a key partner in the operation, but in general, I think that management companies are a backward step for the superintendent's profession. A superintendent working for those companies performs the work, takes the blame for mistakes, and doesn't get proper credit or compensation for his efforts and responsibilities.

"These companies are here. They are a sign of the economic times.

"A lot of people are getting into the golf business for the money alone and not for the love of the game and its traditions. It is fortunate that the money has come along, but now that it has, it can attract a whole different type of person.

"If a club is hiring a management company because they think it is absolving them of liability, they are sadly mistaken. And who really wins in this scenario? The club? The superintendent? No it is the



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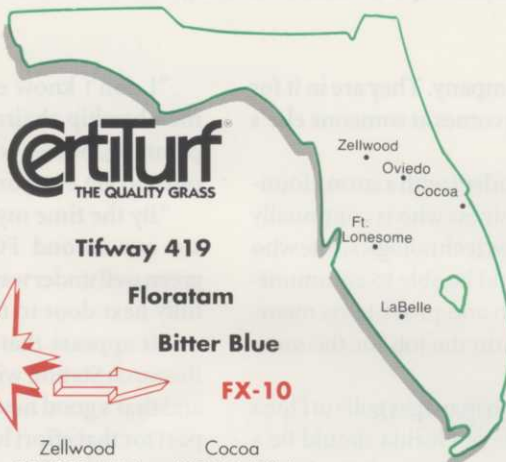


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**It continues to
blow my mind
that we only have
750 A and B
members out of
more than a
thousand golf
courses in the
state.**

management company. They are in it for a profit and that comes at someone else's expense!

"A superintendent with a strong foundation in the business who is continually mastering the new technologies, one who is involved, should be able to communicate with his club and prove to its members that he can do the job for the same cost in house."

"Anybody who manages golf turf for a living in the state of Florida should be a member of this association," Paul said. "It continues to blow my mind that we only have 750 A and B members out of more than a thousand golf courses in the state."

"Maybe they haven't heard about us or maybe they just need to be approached. I don't know, but I do know that in today's climate we need to be the united voice of Florida superintendents everywhere."

"I don't know exactly what our new membership chairman, Greg Plotner, is planning, but we will be putting on a big push to get everyone signed up."

"By the time my year is up, I hope to see our second FGCSA-IFAS research green well under way in Gainesville, hopefully next door to the Envirotron."

"It appears that the Fort Lauderdale Research Station will not have to relocate and that's good news. The statewide support for that effort has given us the capital reserve to implement the research green in Gainesville. This will give us a green in the northern half of the state which will provide good information for superintendents operating in that climate."

"I look for Jeff Hayden and the Seven Rivers Chapter to help spearhead that project. They did a super job in raising funds for the Envirotron the year, and that's the kind of leadership we need for our success."

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**In his profession,
he was involved
with his
associations and
he knew very well
that being
involved meant I
would be at the
center of things
and in contact
with the latest
information in the
business and that
would be an asset
to the club.**

"Of course good education is the key for our continued professional growth and development. I want to keep up that tradition and make sure that remains one of the cornerstones of our association."

"And last but not least, I would like to see some new people get involved in state and local affairs.

"Maybe they just need to be nudged or encouraged a little to step forward. It concerns me that a lot of people are afraid to get involved because they perceive it as a big demand on their time. Certainly it does take some time and effort on their part, but with our executive secretary, Marie Roberts, as their right hand, it isn't as difficult as one might think.

"Her task is to assist everyone on the board, and she does a great job. We would be lost without her, because she does help relieve that time burden by doing most of the legwork for us. We provide the guidance and Marie cranks it out for us. She develops a super working rapport with you and gets to know your likes and dislikes and helps you get the job done quickly and professionally. If this sounds like a plug for Marie, it is!"

"When I was asked to come onto the board, I went to my greens chairman, Marvin Schur, and asked him how the club felt about the idea. I told him I wanted to run it by them before I accepted.

"He said that without a doubt they wanted me involved!

"In his profession, he was involved

with his associations and he knew very well that being involved meant I would be at the center of things and in contact with the latest information in the business and that would be an asset to the club. He also knew that it would be a personal asset to me, Paul Crawford.

"They were concerned that I might become overexposed and entertain offers to move, but I assured them that would not be the case. I merely wanted to give something back to my industry, my profession.

"The more you are involved the more you know. The more you know the further you go. It's like fuel. It's easy to sit back in your hole and say the members don't want me involved! That's short-term thinking. The successful members at your club are the ones who are involved in their professional associations. So, ask your members, your committee, your boss! You might be surprised at their answer.

"As for the future of the industry, we all know that environmental and regulatory issues are here to stay. But that's OK!

"Golf course superintendents are masters at making changes and reacting. We're the best at changing hats to accomplish the task at hand. I don't think you'll find a superintendent out there who doesn't support the principle of environmental stewardship. I think we do want laws and regulations based on common sense, good information, and practical application. And that's where we must

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