



quet tournament with participants coming from all over the United States. It is one of the big events on the island. These folks are pretty intense competitors, so we maintain our three croquet courts just like our greens. The only difference is that I overseeded the greens with a bent/poa mix and this year I'm trying rye on the courts."

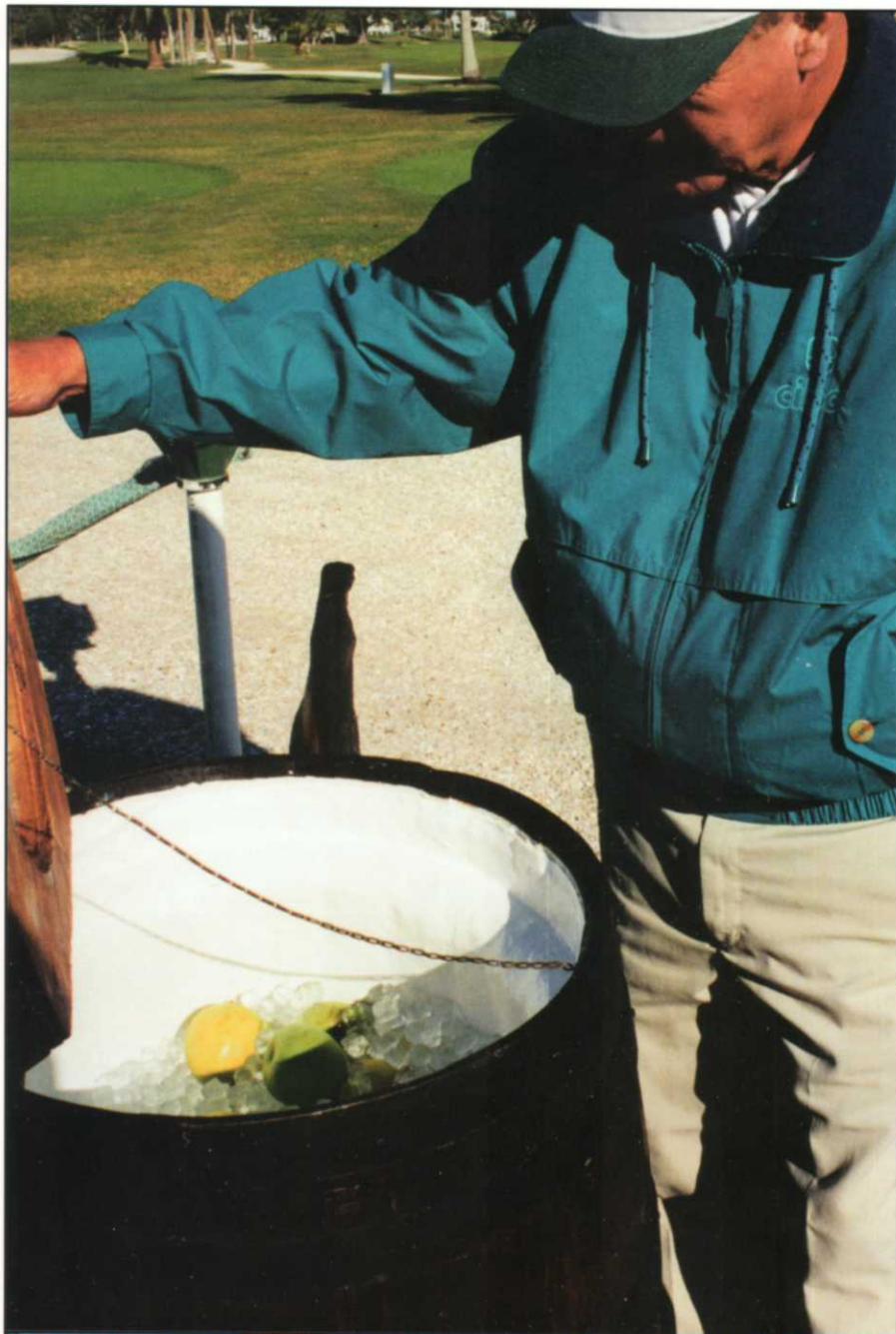
The last of the preserved dwellings is a fisherman's house from Placida, the closest mainland town. Relocated and refurbished, the small building now serves as a comfort station in the northeast corner of the golf course. Of course, there's the Inn itself. It's only a paltry 84 years young! A grand dame of traditions, elegance, and style.

There is a price to pay for living and working in paradise.

Gasparilla Island is seven miles long and maybe a quarter mile wide. Like most barrier islands, it is susceptible to storm surges from hurricanes and other severe tropical storms.

1995 was bad enough for the Gasparilla Inn Golf Course with a summer of record rainfall. Royce reported over 68 inches in a 16-week period.

Then Hurricane Opal added more insult to injury. The hurricane's winds



pushed water up Charlotte Harbor and flooded low lying areas, like the fairways, with salt water. The battering winds and waves caused severe shoreline erosion along the bay side holes and nearly 30 to 40 newly planted Malaysian coconut palms were lost. The remainder had to be pulled out of the ground and stockpiled for replanting or suffer the same fate.

It doesn't take a hurricane to inundate the fairways. Any strong storm coming from the wrong direction combined with a flood tide and a good rain can cause flooding.

Royce said, "These fairways are built out of muck that was barged over from the mainland when the course was built long ago. I dug down through the muck once and hit oyster shells.

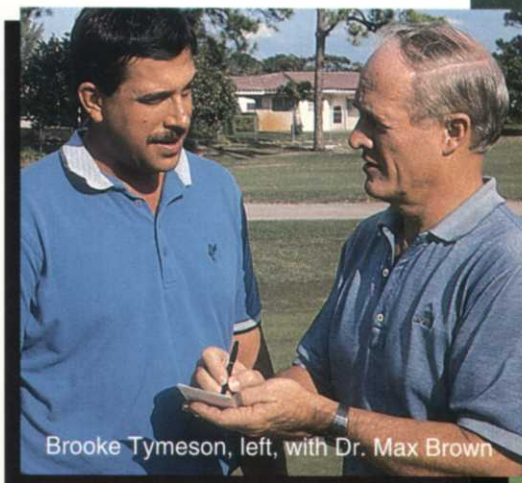
"Obviously, they have trouble draining! I have verti-drained the worst ones

The cypress knee tee marker and the crushed shell cart path are old traditions at the Gasparilla Inn G.C. The "Apple Barrel" on the ninth tee is a new one discovered at a North Carolina club by the General Manager, Steve Sidensticker.

Photos by Joel Jackson

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Brooke Tymeson, left, with Dr. Max Brown

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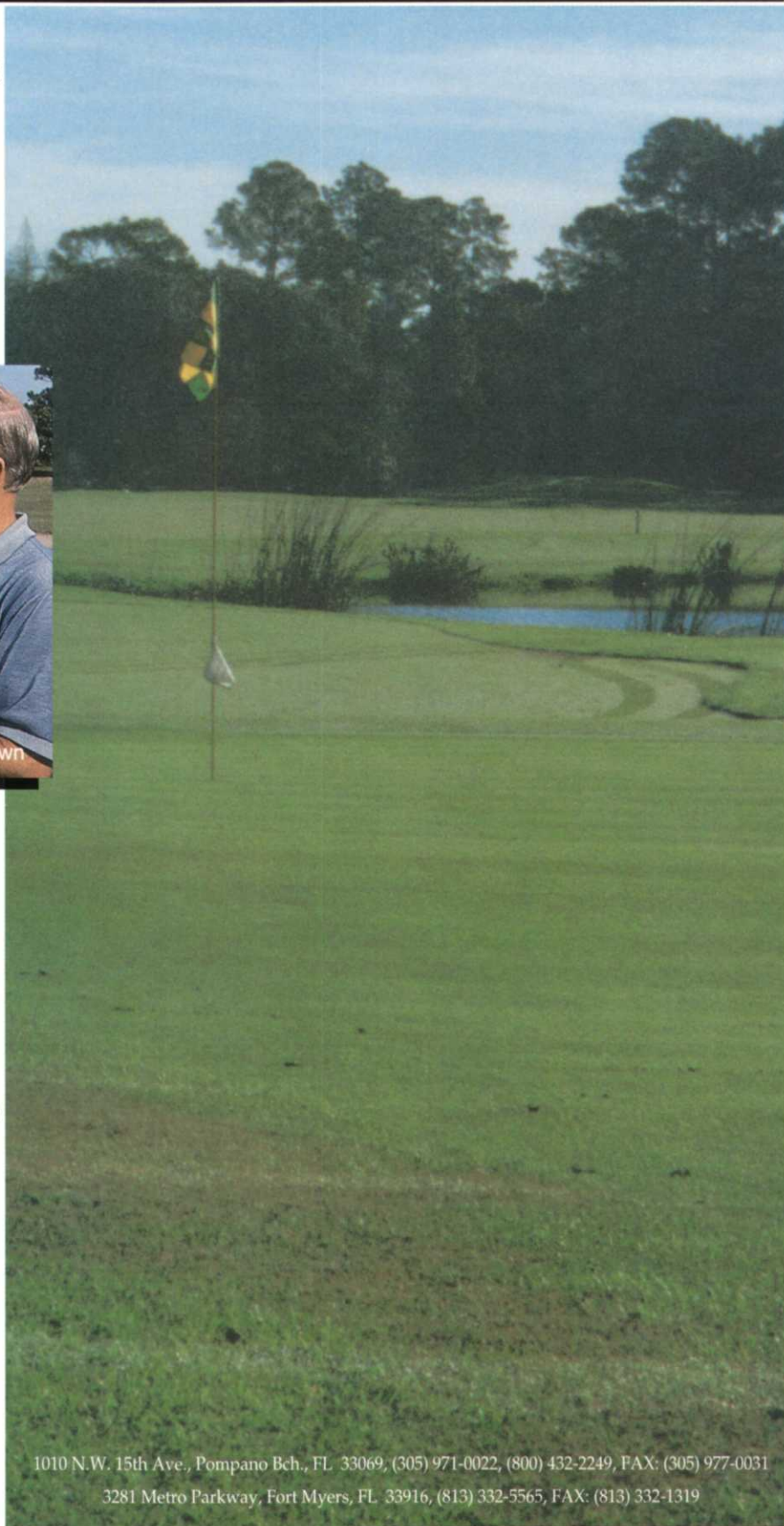
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several times, and we got some good turf growth. The hurricane set us back a little on those holes. Without a doubt this has been the toughest course I've ever managed because of the possible extreme conditions. Because of the frequent salt water flooding, I apply 1,500 pounds of gypsum per acre annually to help neutralize the sodium content."

On the one hand, there's been too much water lately. However, there are times when the irrigation water supply becomes critical on Gasparilla Island.

Royce uses reclaimed water for his irrigation source. With only 500 island residents from late spring to late fall providing effluent, there are times when the fairways can only be watered once every three weeks in order to have water for the greens and tees.

During the peak winter season, the population swells to 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants and shortages are not as frequent. In mid-November, Royce was having to watch his watering schedule closely to have enough effluent to give his two-week old overseeding a nine-minute syringe.

That brings up another idiosyncrasy of living on a sleepy little island. The toll bridge is only rated for 20 tons. No large trucks allowed.

Royce has an agreement with a local contractor to stockpile his topdressing and other bulk materials on the main-

land at Placida, and then he has them trucked over in smaller loads.

Bulk fertilizer orders have to be divided and delivered in small trucks as well. The toll to the island is \$3.20. Royce and all of his employees have an annual \$35 toll pass that the Inn buys for each person. It is a \$700 line-item in his budget.

For all of the built-in challenges that come with the territory, one of the biggest adjustments Royce had to make was to the island lifestyle.

Royce said, "It has taken me awhile to learn that while the expectations for quality and excellence are the same here as anywhere in our business, the sense of urgency is not as acute. The pace is more relaxed as evidenced by our closed season.

"Even in the winter season, you don't know that the island is busy except when you go to the post office or a restaurant for dinner. Our busiest days on the course will see 130 to 140 players.

"There are no tee times! People come out and just find an open hole if the first tee is backed up! It is the way the members want it.

"I have developed a good comfort level with the unique nature of this position. About the time I get tired of the more intense golf schedule in the winter, along comes our summer projects to focus on. Then after the long hot summer, it's good

to see the members, guests and hotel staff come back again. It really helps to break up the year."

Three visits by President George Bush *really* helped to break up the routine and Royce ranks them among the top highlights of his career.

"The security measures were just unbelievable," he said! "They made the air space over the island off limits to all aircraft. They had a Coast Guard cutter stationed out front of the home where he stayed. They even had Navy Seals in the water between the cutter and the shore.

"He would arrive by helicopter and land on the fourth and fifth fairways. Sharpshooters would be stationed on the top floor of the pro shop building. While he played golf, the Secret Service would keep two station wagons loaded with enough armament for a small army in our maintenance compound. They let us look inside once. It was absolutely amazing!"

"Mr. Bush's routine usually consisted of jogging the perimeter of the course every morning and then spending half a day playing golf with Mrs. Bush and the other half fishing.

"When he jogged, there was a group of agents all around him and advance and rear guards as well. Two of his visits were while he was in office.

"The last one was after he left office. Then he only had four agents guarding



This grove of palms behind #16 green literally had to be rescued from Hurricane Opal. The area where Royce is standing was eroded away by the storm surge. Note the high shell content of the soil.

Photo by Joel Jackson



Friends and neighbors



Dinner Time



Defending the homestead



Family portrait

him. We had a 'no carts allowed' restriction one day so he just slung his golf bag over his shoulder and walked the course.

"I got to meet him and have my picture taken with him. It was definitely a rare and unusual experience for a golf course superintendent!"

Gasparilla Island has a long and rich history from Spanish exploration in the

1600's to American presidential visits in the 1900's. It has remained largely undeveloped commercially over the years. The old buildings and the golf course are being renovated to preserve the traditional and quiet ambience of the island.

For Royce Stewart, the Gasparilla Inn Golf Course is a unique management opportunity and the place he calls home.

Meanwhile, back at the rookery...

David Bailey focuses his camera on a Great Blue Heron family in a rookery at the Gasparilla Inn G.C. and captures some scenes from a day in the life of wildlife on a Florida golf course.

What does it take to become a CERTIFIED

Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary?

*A journey through the process
in four installments*



BY SHELLY FOY
AND GREG PLOTNER

A question that is often asked is “How do I become a fully certified golf course in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program?”

In an effort to encourage others to participate and offer help along the way, we will be writing a 4-part series on a golf course becoming a fully certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. We will document the progress made, as well as offer any tips we can to smooth the way for others.

The golf course we will be following through certification is the Medalist Golf Club in Hobe Sound. They joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) in May 1993.

In June of 1995, Greg Plotner, CGCS became the golf course superintendent and set a goal of becoming a fully certified cooperative sanctuary in one year. Greg has experience with the ACSP, as his previous club, Tampa Palms Golf & Country Club was the first golf course in Florida to become fully certified.

The Resource Inventory for the Medalist Club was completed in November

1995. The ACSP staff estimates that it takes 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete this form, however we found that it took a little longer.

The purpose of the Resource Inventory is to help you describe your property and management practices, thus making it easier for you to decide on the types of projects you would like to undertake. The Resource Inventory is eight pages and filled with check off boxes which makes it easier to complete.

Some suggestions to keep in mind when working on your Resource Inventory:

- Start with the information you already know
- Estimate your acreage, don't go crazy trying to get specific
- Don't hesitate to write “I don't know.”
- Don't forget that pictures are indeed worth a thousand words
- Including a property map or course diagram is helpful

Remember, this is general informa

Audubon Society (NY) goes International

For the last several years, the Audubon Society of New York State (ASNY) has been working to establish proactive conservation programs that are aimed at involving people in programs and projects that will benefit the environment. ASNY has gone a considerable distance toward reaching its goals.

In order to expand and build upon our endeavors, it is necessary that a new broader and stronger foundation be established. To unify our national and international programs into a cohesive unit, we are pleased to announce the creation of Audubon International Center For Sustainable Resource Management

Audubon International has become the umbrella organization under which will fall all of the programs formerly managed by ASNY including the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System and associated wildlife and environmental education programs. In addition, several new and exciting programs are being created which will focus on:

- Research
- Education
- Conservation Assistance

Ron Dodson, President of New York Audubon says that “The move was made because of the rapid growth we've seen, and the interest in our program well beyond the borders of New York State.”

For more information, call (518) 767-9051



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tion which is meant to help ACSP staff become familiar with your course. Once they have this, they will send you a report written specifically for your golf course which will make recommendations on projects they feel you will be able to undertake.

Always remember, you are the one that makes decisions on what you do or not do. The ACSP staff only makes recommendations.

After receiving your report, the next step is the Environmental Planning Worksheet.

As part of this worksheet, you will need to identify people who will serve on your Resource Committee. Why do you need a Resource Advisory Committee? They can help reduce some of the work by undertaking projects, assisting with the resource inventory or even helping to list wildlife species.

Your resource committee should contain golf course staff, green committee members, golfers, and people in your community. Educating the public on the value of golf courses is an opportunity which cannot be passed up.

Having individuals on the resource committee who are not involved with your golf course is a great way to be proactive in your community.

Having individuals on the committee outside of your golf course is a good way to be proactive in your community. This will allow you the opportunity to educate the public about the value of a golf course.

Your Resource Committee can also help you with:

- Planning
- Technical Knowledge
- Volunteer Work
- Publicity
- Continuity

Here is a copy of the Environmental Plan for the Medalist Club, which includes the Resource Committee. We may add to this group as we go along.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Request for Certification

Course Name: Medalist Golf Club

Address: 9650 SE Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455

Phone: 407-546-0647

Contact Person: Greg A. Plotner, CGCS

INSTRUCTIONS: The purpose of the Environmental Plan is to help you define your goals and plan strategies to fully develop your Cooperative Sanctuary. The plan does not have to be elaborate — a simple outline will help you get started. However, the plan should address what you plan to do in each certification category, who will be responsible for each area, and what your time frame is for completion. This form is designed to help make this process both simple and comprehensive. We encourage you to make a plan that will not only be useful for certification, but will be valuable when managing various aspects of your cooperative sanctuary. Over time, you can review your plan to see if you're on track, check off goals that you've achieved, and periodically update it to respond to new ideas, needs or concerns. If you have any questions when filling out this form, please call us at (518) 767-9051. When you've completed your Environmental Plan, please make a copy for your records and send this form to us at the above address. We'll review it, send you a "Certificate of Recognition" in Environmental Planning, and forward guidelines for completing certification in the remaining categories.

STEP 1: Define Overall Objectives.

- What does your course want to achieve as a Cooperative Sanctuary participant?

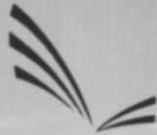
The Medalist Golf Club recognizes the natural scenic and habitat value of the native upland and wetland habitats on site. As such, the Master Plan of the course was designed to effectively integrate the golf course in a way which enhances golf course play while protecting the value of the wetland and upland preserve areas. We as a participant wish to demonstrate to others our abilities to continue with our master plan and share our experiences with others.

- What unique features or constraints of your site have to be accounted for when developing your golf course sanctuary (eg. public play, member privacy, tournament play, neighboring land owners, unique habitats, lack of space, environmental regulations, etc.)?

- 1) Member Privacy
- 2) Unique & Protected Habitats
- 3) Environmental Regulations
- 4) Prohibitive Activities

STEP 2: Review Each Certification Category and Outline Plan-Of-Action.

Use the project checklists on the following pages to decide which projects you will implement. The checklists are provided for guidance; feel free to come up with additional projects that suit your course. As you outline your plan in each category, try to



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Public/Member Involvement and Education

The intent of this category is to help you gain recognition and support for your environmental programs, increase golfer understanding of wildlife and environmental quality on the golf course, and let the public know that golf courses can be valuable community assets.

Member and public awareness and involvement in environmental projects is often the key to their success.

Choose projects to help you focus your efforts, increase participation, build support, and generate positive publicity for the work you do.

Audubon Resource Committee - List possible contact people (members or regular golfers, local resource people/organizations, staff, etc.) that can provide special information or assistance to help you carry out your plan.

define the following:

- What are your priority projects?
- Who will be responsible for implementing projects in each certification area?
- What is your time-line for when projects will be initiated and completed?

If you have already completed projects, simply write "complete" in the space provided for "Projected Completion Date." Feel free to attach additional pages as needed for comments or details.

PUBLIC/MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION

Audubon Resource Committee

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Relation to Course</u>	<u>Area of Focus/Expertise</u>
Greg Plotner	Golf Course Superintendent	
Shelly Foy	USGA Green Section	Audubon Program
Jane Krebs	Tom Lucido & Associates	Land Planner for Medalist
Dave Coogan	Blue Flag Aquatics	Wetland/Upland Mitigation
Tom Aiello	Aiello Landscape	Landscaping Contractor
Steve Beeman	EcoShores, Inc.	Aquatic Plant Management

Once you have contacted Resource People or formed a committee, share your environmental plan with them and solicit suggestions for additional projects.

Public Involvement Project Checklist
Please check projects that you plan to do.

Projected Start Date **Projected Completion Date**

Education/Public Information Projects (may include):

- Display of ACSP registration, wildlife list, project info., etc.
- Educational Posters Oct. 1995 Ongoing
- Newsletter articles Nov.1995 Ongoing
- Brochure of ACSP/Environmental Activities
- Presentations at workshops or seminars 1993 Ongoing
- Press releases
- Tournament publicity
- Other:

Involvement Projects(may include):

- Member, scout, or school involvement in nest box building or monitoring
- Member/Public involvement in wildlife inventory Dec.1995
- Member/Public help with planning or publicity
- Member/Public help with planting projects
- Nature trail, wildlife walks, or tours of course
- Nature guide to the course for member/public use
- Kids projects:
- "Adopt a School" - sponsor a school in ACSP for Schools
- Other:

Person(s) responsible for Public Involvement projects: Shelly Foy
Comments: