

Superintendent is 'most important person at my course,' say most *Golf Digest* readers

GCSAA in particular and superintendents in general were viewed in a positive way in the January issue of *Golf Digest*. Steve Mona, CEO at association headquarters, was listed among the 36 people deemed most powerful in golf. Mona, CAE, was ranked 29th on the list that was headed by Tim Finchem, commissioner of the PGA Tour.

In that same issue, *Digest* released the latest in its at-random series of reader surveys, this one titled "Things we didn't know until now." The final question was, "Who is the most important person at your club or course?"

The resounding answer? Golf course superintendent drew the nod from 48 percent of the respondents. A distant

GCSAA Online
Items of interest from GCSAA's Online web site

second was golf professional with 25 percent. Club manager was third with 14 percent.

USGA president praises work of superintendents

NOTE: The following comments are excerpts from a media conference featuring Judy Bell, USGA president, conducted Feb. 10.

Q. What is your outlook for your second term as USGA president?

A. The first year was terrific, and our championships were terrific. Our mission is to open the game to everyone who wants to play.

Q. What, in your opinion, is the role of the golf course superintendent in the game?


A. We have a wonderful relationship with GCSAA. I believe we are on the same page as to what we can do to improve the game of golf. We have one mind in the direction we want to go.

I can't tell you how important the golf course superintendents are to the game of golf. We need to preach that, not to the choir, but to the world. I don't think there is anything more beautiful than a

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golf course. We need to portray our work with the environment in a positive and beautiful way.

Q. What are your perceptions on USGA green construction specifications?

A. We have 15 greens constructed around the country to do research. Real world test-



Judy Bell

ing is important. We want to take our testing to the playing field.

Sometimes our specifications have taken some heat, but we strive to be good listeners. If there are concerns, or questions, we will always listen. We are hoping that this varietal testing of grasses will be the proof of the pudding.

Q. Could you comment about technological advances in the game?

A. Technology can get in the way of how golf should be played. We are so focused on the latest gadget. Courses can remain pristine and natural, they do not need to be perfect.

One of the charms of our game is it isn't like basketball or football, where the field is the same. Our playing field is different every time we play. Golf courses are natural, not contrived.

Q. What about green speed?

A. Who says that the challenge is greater for speed than it is weight and line? As golfers, we blame everything except where the blame should go - us.

Q. What would you like for the golfing public to know about the role of the golf course superintendent?

A. I don't think they have a great enough identity today. I don't think the public knows how unusual and creative their jobs are. I'd like to see that message get out.

"Par" begins fourth season, moves to The Golf Channel

"Par for the Course," GCSAA's award-winning, 30-minute television show, moves this year to The Golf Channel. The production's fourth season began March

22 at 6:30 p.m. (Eastern time).

Each week, "Par for the Course" takes viewers inside the world of golf by featuring how-to-play tips from Golf Digest school instructors, interviews with industry leaders and celebrities, site visits to top golf venues throughout the world, agronomic insights and environmental success stories.

GCSAA also will produce feature segments for The Golf Channel's live tournament broadcasts. The Golf Channel is currently available in 7 million homes, but projections are that it will reach 14 million homes by the end of 1997.

"Par for the Course" was aired on the Prime Network in its inaugural season, then moved to ESPN in 1995 and 1996. This year, GCSAA will produce 13 episodes, airing every Saturday at 6:30 p.m. EST, with replays Tuesdays at 3 a.m. EST and another weekday afternoon.

GCSAA will carry on its strong relationship with ESPN, continuing to produce the popular feature segments during the network's 1997 PGA Tour and Senior PGA Tour telecasts. GCSAA also will expand its presence on the airwaves by broadcasting feature segments to be run during TBS telecasts of various PGA Tour and PGA of America events.

"We are excited about GCSAA's television presence for the upcoming year," says Bruce R. Williams, GCSAA president. "First and foremost, we have a product recognized by our membership and the golf community as high quality that promotes our association and educates the viewer.

"The Golf Channel gives us an attractive early prime-time viewing slot vital to reaching our target audience. And, the combination of The Golf Channel, ESPN and TBS provides a widespread distribution to those who enjoy the game of golf."

"Par for the Course" has been afforded honors in the past, including selection to the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Associations Advance America Awards honor roll.

The award recognizes significant contributions to society by associations and their programs. The International Network of Golf (ING) also selected "Par for the Course" as a finalist in its Public

Relations/Promotional Program category in both 1995 and 1996.

GCSAA's Scott Smith, senior manager of video services, returns for his fourth year as the show's producer, and veteran broadcaster Duke Frye also returns as host. Postproduction service will be provided by Great Plains Television and Creative Communications of Kansas City.

The Scotts Co. is once again the show's presenting sponsor, and this year's supporting sponsor is Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE). Several RISE members have also joined with the organization to sponsor a new segment within each episode.

Segment presenting sponsors are Novartis, Rhone-Poulenc Ag Co. and Zeneca Professional Products, and the segment contributing sponsors are AgrEvo USA Co., American Cyanamid and Bayer Corp.

GCSAA headquarters site joins Audubon system

GCSAA's national office has joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Corporate/Business Properties. Located at 1421 Research Park Drive in Lawrence, Kan., the grounds at GCSAA headquarters cover nearly eleven acres, including three acres of native grasses.

GCSAA staff members have worked on a volunteer basis to enhance the property for wildlife with deer licks, bird feeders and nesting boxes as well as installing shrubs and trees when replanting that serve as food sources. Day-to-day work activities also include energy conservation and paper and aluminum can recycling programs.

"The Cooperative Sanctuary program gives people an opportunity to do something good for the environment right where they live, work and recreate," said Neil Gifford, environmental educator for Audubon International. "We welcome GCSAA's commitment to managing the property in an environmentally sensitive manner."

Aside from the current on-site activities, plans also call for the development of a nature trail lined by bluebird nest boxes. Native plantings will be used to enhance

the trail which will pass a section of prairie grasses that will be left undisturbed.

In addition to its on-site improvements, GCSAA and Rain Bird Golf Irrigation serve as co-sponsors to the ACSF for Schools program. Through the program, superintendents work with schools to create projects that foster resource conservation and wildlife enhancement.

Crenshaw hails Old Tom Morris in acceptance speech

NOTE: The following comments are excerpts from a media conference featuring Ben Crenshaw, 1997 GCSAA Old Tom Morris award winner, conducted Feb. 11.

In his speech to accept the Old Tom Morris Award, GCSAA's highest honor, Ben Crenshaw made this opening statement:

"I am so honored. The two awards that will always mean the most to me are the Bobby Jones and the Old Tom Morris. I've been reading about them since I was 14. They are a part of history. Bobby Jones has always been my idol. And Old Tom Morris, he's the fountainhead.

"As greenkeeper, Old Tom Morris took care of the course, but let nature take its course. But he did so much more. His life was unbelievable. He did as much to spread the game as anyone. I think those values, and those of Harvey Penick's shaped me as much as anyone."

Q. What importance does the golf course superintendent play in the game?

A. Without a doubt, the most important person on the golf course is the man who takes care of it. It's backwards [the recognition]. Those men and women are far more important than we give them credit for. They do a wonderful, incredible job, under some tough scrutiny, often times by people who do not know anything about the job. They are amazing.

Q. What is your basis for your love of golf course architecture and history?

A. What started it was my first USGA Junior at the Country Club of Brookline. It was the first time I had left the state of Texas. I was so scared to take a divot. I think I was there two days before I finally took a divot. It was so beautiful. I really fell in love with the game, the architec-

ture and history, so it really started right there.

Q. What are your perceptions on current golf course architecture?

A. Designers are doing incredible creations on what can be called throwaway properties. We are returning to a more classic design, which I like. I feel the

Answers to Quiz

1. d. Baffy – 5 wood; 2. a. Brassie – 2 wood; 3. c. Cleek – 4 wood; 4. f. Jigger – 4 iron; 5. h. Lofter – 8 iron; 6. g. Mashie – 5 iron; 7. e. Mid Mashie – 3 iron; 8. i. Niblick – 9 iron; 9. b. Spoon – 3 wood

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Q. How do you feel about your tournament play?

A. I still enjoy competitive golf and I feel like I've got a lot left to play.

Q. Tell us about your architecture business.

A. I am so lucky to be a partner with Bill Coore. He's an agronomist, and has taught me so much about this field. In turn, I try to work on the playability of the golf course design.

Bill's got a soft spot for the superintendent, because that is how he got his start working with Pete Dye. It is amateur play that is the basis for the strategic design of golf courses. And hand-in-hand, glove-in-glove with this design are the people who take care of golf courses.

PGA Reserve South named best new affordable course

The PGA golf course at The Reserve's South course has won an award for best new affordable course for 1996 from Golf Digest magazine. The North course was named this year's 7th best new affordable course. This course also was featured in



Ben Crenshaw, pro golfer, architect and golf historian, is flanked by fellow Texan and GCSAA Director Tommy Witt, CGCS, left, and Immediate Past President Bruce Williams, CGCS at the GCSAA Press Conference. Photo by Joel Jackson.

the September issue of Golf Course Management.

In addition, construction plans are under way for a vacation village complex, including the first PGA vacation club by Vistana Resort. The development, planned by the PGA of America and situated on 70 acres next to PGA Golf Club's South Course, will begin with vacation villas, a hotel and the PGA's new golf learning center.

Smyers building Tampa course

Golf course architect Steve Smyers has been selected to design and build Lochenheath in Tampa, Fla. The private, national golf club is owned by Outback Steakhouse founders Bob Bushman and Chris Sullivan. Construction of the course began in September. It is scheduled to open in fall 1997.

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Fire on the hole!

Another benefit of golf courses emerges



The Habitat Golf Course proved to be an effective fire break against this raging 900-acre brush fire near Malabar in January. Photograph by Robert McDaniel.

Security and lower fire hazard

Expanses of green, low-growing turfs in the landscape provide a high visibility zone that discourages unwanted intruders and vandals. Such turfs offer a low-cost approach that is a viable security measure, especially around sensitive military and police installations.

Also, the low fuel value of green, prostrate-growing turfs serves a valuable function as a firebreak that significantly lowers the fire hazard if properly positioned (Youngner, 1970). This attribute is especially important for homes and buildings adjacent to extensive woodland or brush areas.

- James Beard and Robert Green

Fire at the Habitat

This past January a wildfire consumed approximately 900 acres of pine and palmetto woodlands adjacent to our golf course, The Habitat, in Malabar.

Arson was suspected, but no one has been arrested.

The fire did very little damage to the

course. Just a small area was burned by the twelfth tee but I think the damage could have been much worse if we had not used the irrigation system to fight it.

We have very little rough here at the Habitat. It is mostly fairways with woods on both sides. I hate to think what this course would look like if the fire had got to the other side.

As the fire approached the fairways, my irrigation technician, Doug Bonnet, would shut off the hydraulic supply to the satellites. All the heads started up at once which stopped the fire from crossing the fairway to the other side.

- Robert McDaniel

Golf course's water saves the day

A new state-of-the-art, multipump, computer-driven irrigation system at Crane Creek Country Club in Boise, Idaho, turned out to be a lot more than superintendent Richard Hutchins could ever hope for a few months ago.

The system, newly installed under the direction of Kuhn Associates of Mercer

Island, Wash., literally came to the rescue of the homes of several residents near the course during a wildfire that raged through the Boise area late last summer.

As the fire threatened to move through some of the sagebrush and cheatgrass bordering Crane Creek fairways and toward a condominium development, Hutchins—an 11-year member of GCSAA—had his crews turn the part-circle sprinklers 180 degrees and water down the out-of-play areas.

The move effectively abated the wildfire in that area and spared the nearby homes.

"Afterwards, in looking at the fire line, it's clear that the fire stopped at the sprinklers' water line about 200 yards from our homes," resident Ivan Strand told the *Idaho Statesman* after the blaze.

"We believe that without such a generous and neighborly act by Crane Creek Country Club, the Curling Cove Condominiums would be toast today."

- GCSAA Online

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It has performed well in tests conducted by Joel Barber in Stillwater, Okla., A.J. Powell in Lexington, Ky., Joe

Kennedy on The Little Course at Aspen Grove in Franklin, Tenn., and Southern Turf Nurseries in Lake Wales, Fla.

Tift 94 has shown high non-preference to mole crickets at Tifton, Ga., and better turf quality ratings and plant color than Tifway under fairway conditions in Tennessee.

Tift 94 is suitable for fairways, tees, athletic fields, lawns and other landscaping uses where fine-textured dense turf is needed.

It is a patented cultivar that is vegetatively propagated and produces no seed.

Foundation planting material will be available, beginning in 1997, to licensed sod and sprig producers of Tift 94.

Earl Elsner (Georgia Seed Development Commission, 2420 S. Milledge Ave., Athens, Ga. Phone: 706-542-5640; Fax: 706-542-9025) should be contacted for information on how to become qualified to be a certified grower of Tift 94 bermudagrass.

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Las Vegas

Glitz, Glamour and Golf

BY JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

Welcome to fabulous Las Vegas, the city that never sleeps!

During GCSAA's 68th International Conference and Show I stayed at the MGM Grand mega-resort that covered over one square block with all its parking lot, arena and amusement park appendages.

The hotel glowed emerald-city green in the night in tribute to the MGM movie classic, "The Wizard of Oz". One thing was for sure, Toto, we weren't in Kansas any more!

I'll admit the flashing neon lights and larger-than-life resorts along Las Vegas Boulevard were very exciting, but a three or four-day trip would be more palatable as the hustling bustling throngs of people and the "bong-bong-bong" of the slot machines got a little wearing after a while.

The pace along the main strip is pretty frenetic. If you sit still too long you feel like you're missing something somewhere. From the newest show and hotel sidewalk extravaganza, like the battling ships at Treasure Island, to the still-spectacular volcano eruption at the Mirage to the best and cheapest buffet dinners, there was always something to see and do.

By all accounts GCSAA's 68th International Conference and Show in Las Vegas was a smashing success.

The seminars early in the week were filled to capacity, setting all sorts of attendance records. I ought to know. I had to pick my fourth and fifth choices since I hesitated a little too long in getting registered.

Even then, I had two of the most interesting seminars I had ever taken.

"The Challenge of Owning Your Own Course" and "Maximizing Job Satisfaction" gave me a fresh perspective on the challenges and possibilities available to superintendents everywhere. I recom-



FGCSA Association Manager Marie Roberts let this Elvis impersonator have his picture taken with her after she hit a jackpot early in the convention.



Vegas Revenue Review

*Spinning shiny steel cylinders rolled,
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*Conservative FGCSA members
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*Until one met Lady Luck
and didn't get burned!
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- IRENE JONES

mend both of them if you need a change from bugs and weeds.

As always the peer networking was evident as seminar classmates compared notes and swapped business cards during breaks and at lunch. There is a nice thread of continuity when you run into people from across the country you met at previous conferences and you catch up on each others' lives. It's called personal growth and it shapes the kind of manager and person you become just as surely as the classroom material.

Nicklaus admitted that those "chocolate drop" mounds at Loxahatchee and Grand Cypress didn't really work.

It was fun talking to fellow Florida superintendent Joe Dougherty. He was attending his first GCSAA Conference and he was really getting pumped up and enthused by mingling with all the golf talent and absorbing information.

On the flip side, I talked to a dejected superintendent in Orlando after the conference whose club manager doesn't see any value in paying for him to attend seminars. What a shame!

While I enjoyed trying my hand at hitting a slot machine jackpot and learning to play blackjack, the bulk of my time

— and that of other superintendents — was spent on business. I know there are a lot of clubs out there that still don't support paying their superintendents' travel expenses to meetings and seminars just like my friend in Orlando.

A venue like Las Vegas is even a harder sell!

But my schedule managed to cut through the glitz and glamour and focus on golf. My schedule was probably typical of thousands of other superintendents. Only the names of the seminars and concurrent sessions were different.

I attended three full-day seminars and one half-day seminar for tested CEU credits toward my recertification on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

On Monday, I went to the early-morning "Innovative Superintendents Session" and then I attended a Golf Course Architects Forum with Rees Jones, Arthur Hills and Jack Nicklaus. Nicklaus admitted, to his credit, that those "chocolate drop" mounds at Loxahatchee and Grand Cypress didn't really work from a maintenance standpoint.

A little later I went to the Ben Crenshaw press conference where he talked about winning the Old Tom Morris Award. Since Crenshaw is such a golf history buff, he seemed truly overwhelmed by the significance of the award. On Tuesday, I went to the Chapter Newsletter Editors Forum in the morning and spent the afternoon at the trade show. Wednes-

day was devoted entirely to the trade show.

The show was filled as usual with the tools of our trade with every technological advancement prominently displayed. I walked through miles of aisles of equipment, accessories, amendments, biological controls, fertilizers, chemicals, and services.

In contrast to all the modern equipment present and of nostalgic interest was the display of mowers and equipment from the Old Course in St. Andrews, Scotland. These items have been donated to the Heritage Preservation Committee of the GCSAA, which is collecting tools and memorabilia that represent the history of our profession.

Evenings were filled with traditional functions and receptions.

There was the Opening Session on Saturday night with Capt. James Lovell, commander of the Apollo 13 mission. While generally praising the accuracy of the hit movie's account to the mission, Lovell gave a personal account of the real trials and tribulations of that event. His message: The successful solution and conclusion to that potential disaster was the best example of teamwork he could think of.

The much-ballyhooed Government Relations Session with Eleanor Clift and Fred Barnes of PBS's McLaughlin Group was interesting but a little underwhelming compared to some speakers in the past.