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*Dale Davenport, The Golf Center at Kings Island*

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Olde Florida  
 Clubhouse

# CONTENTS

**FALL  
 1999**

**FOREWORDS** SUPPORT IS A TWO-WAY STREET ..... 4  
 President Darren Davis points out that suppliers who support turfgrass research deserve superintendents' support at the FTGA's annual trade show.

**SPOTLIGHT** LEGENDS, ANNUAL MEETING, CHAPTER ROUNDUP ..... 8  
 Meet Machine-Gun Al Ross and horticulturalist John Hutton, a pair of South Florida legends; Board approves committee to investigate a FGCSA web site; Ridge chapter leads effort to replace ailing boy's stolen bike.

**COVER STORY** DON'T WORRY. BE HAPPY ..... 22  
 At Olde Florida Golf Club there are only three rules and the first one is that there are no rules. The second is to be happy and the third is to go elsewhere if you can't follow rule number two.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** IMPROVING PARTICIPATION ..... 38  
 Craig Weyandt asked the GCSAA for help in improving attendance at Treasure Coast meetings and got a multi-point response with the offer of more help.

**HANDS ON** PUBLIC RELATIONS ..... 42  
 Dealing with public relations is harder than growing grass for most superintendents. The trick is to understand that you are a salesperson, like it or not. Super Tip is a rolling storage rack for mower reels.

**STEWARDSHIP** ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR GOLF ..... 54  
 Part 2 of The Environmental Principles for Golf outline voluntary guidelines for practical steps every golf course can take to protect and enhance the environment. And there are suggestions for golfers as well.

**INDUSTRY ROUNDUP** FTGA CONFERENCE, TURF ACADEMY ..... 60  
 Jack Harrell of Harrell's Fertilizers received the Wreath of Grass Award at the FTGA's annual Conference and Show; GCSAA CEO Steve Mona was keynote speaker at Harrell's Turf Academy; GCSAA retirement plan for superintendents; Tidings from UF Turf Coordinator John Cisar, news from the net.

**AFTERWORDS** FLORADWARF, PHOTOS, JARRELL, JACKSON ..... 76  
 FloraDwarf is the featured ultradwarf in this issue's installment of the series on the new bermudagrasses; the 5th Annual Florida Green Photo Contest drew a record number of entries and the winners are stunning; Mark Jarrell, CGCS, asks where everybody was at the FTGA Conference and Show; Joel Jackson responds with a paraphrase of Willie Nelson.

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# Advertiser Index

Aerification Plus .....	77	Nucrane Corp .....	Back Cover
AgrEvo .....	55	Nutri-Turf Inc .....	62
Almar Turf .....	51	Pike Creek Turf Farms .....	46
Ameraturf .....	77	Rhone Poulenc .....	6
American Cyanamid ...	15,31,43,59	Safety Storage .....	50
Aquagenix .....	44	Smithco .....	39,40
Aquatrol .....	29	South Florida Grassing .....	68
Central Florida GCSA .....	19	South Florida Turf Products .....	87
Century Rain Aid .....	65	Southern Golf Products .....	49
Chemical Containers .....	51,56	Southern States .....	18
Ducor International .....	47	Spread-Rite .....	39
ER Jahna Industries .....	57	Sullivan Electric .....	48
Floratine Products Group .....	87	Textron Turf Care & Specialty Products .....	21
Florida Silica Sand .....	70	The Toro Company .....	35
Florida Turfgrass Association ....	61	Tifton Physical Lab .....	79
Golf Agronomics Supply .....	9	TMI Turf MerchantsIns Back Cover	
Golf Ventures .....	27	Tom Burrows Turfgrass Service	39
Green Way .....	66	Toro Agronomics ... Inside Cover,1	
Harrell's .....	69	Toro Dealers of Florida .....	44
Howard Fertilizer .....	63	Tresca Industries .....	21
International Seeds .....	53	United Horticultural Supply .....	71
Kilpatrick Turf .....	5	Valent USA .....	67
Laserturf .....	70	Van Waters & Rogers .....	13
Lesco .....	17	Wesco Turf .....	Inside Cover,1
Milorganite .....	10	Zeneca .....	25
North Georgia Turf .....	56		
Novartis .....	74		

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**M**y hat is off to the FTGA Board of Directors and its staff for presenting the professionals of the turfgrass industry such a wonderful opportunity for education, fellowship, and networking at the FTGA Conference and Show at Gainesville in August.

The Board and the various committees involved with the event listened to suggestions and desires from industry and certainly made every attempt to appease the masses.

Were they successful in their attempt to pump new life into the annual conference and show? Well, if you go strictly by the number of attendees, they probably were not. However, those who took the time and made the effort to take part in this outstanding event were treated to a first class affair that certainly was as good as, and — to most attendees — probably better than any previous FTGA

Conference and Show.

Once again, the excuses for choosing not to attend will be rampant and, while some will definitely be legitimate, others will be almost humorous not to mention “old” and overused. Yes, I said “choose” because it is after all a choice for most people to attend just as it is a choice for most golf course superintendents whether to be a member of a professional association like the FGCSA.

I have heard, “Isn’t it enough that I send in my dues each year? After all, by paying my dues I am supporting the association, right?”

Well, it would undoubtedly benefit us all if we had every individual in our profession who resides in Florida as a member of the FGCSA, but being a dues-paying member is not enough.

Associations such as the FGCSA do not make a profit on dues. In fact, the money raised from dues covers only a fraction of the expenses required for the association’s day-to-day operations. Obviously, since dues do not even cover expenses, they are not being used to pay for

research, public relations, or other services the FGCSA and the FTGA provide their membership that allow superintendents to do a better job and gain respect in their chosen profession.

Where does this extra money come from? I hate to say it but to be blunt... vendors, from direct donations, participation in trade shows, sponsorship of events or rebates. And, just as dues do not provide profit, the entrance fees for our meetings and golf outings in most situations merely cover the costs associated with the event. The money raised from these events and subsequently donated to the various associations in most situations comes from support by vendors.

The bottom line is vendor participation for most Superintendents is a double-edged sword.

Just like most of you, I have said, “Isn’t this supposed to be a golf course superintendents’ association?” Or, “It seems like the majority of the people at these events are vendors!”

Well, like it or not, we need and rely on vendor support to raise money for advancements in the profession and vendors are going to attend meetings, golf outings, and trade shows in order to associate themselves with their customers... *you!*

You should be asking yourself, “How long will vendors continue to support our associations if their customers (you and I) do not attend the events that allow them to come in contact with us. Is it enough to just send in your dues check every year? That is a question that only you can answer.

I would like to thank the vendors that have been longtime supporters of the association and especially those who made the effort to sponsor and support the recent FTGA Conference and Show. The money raised by the FTGA is used for turfgrass research that directly benefits the members of the FGCSA. I would also like to thank the countless volunteers of the FGCSA, the local chapters and the FTGA for devoting your personal time to provide quality education, and events in an effort to entice your peers to attend these extracurricular outings that benefit them and the profession as a whole.

Thank you and I look forward to a productive year as president of the FGCSA. 🦩

## Support is a Two-way Street

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Darren Davis  
President  
FGCSA



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


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# Machine-Gun Al Asks Questions in Rapid Fire

## Dedicated S. Fla. Superintendent Receives FGCSA President's Award

BY ROBERT G. KLITZ, CGCS  
Golf Hollywood

**S**o who is Al Ross? When asked directly he said, "Al Ross is a realist who says what's on his mind. Hopefully people will view this as honesty. He is loyal, sincere, and helpful." He gave a very accurate self description.

Here is a man who has dedicated the past 19 years of his life to the Sunrise Country Club and at least 14 years of service to the South Florida GCSA. I will not be discussing the mowing height of Al's greens; his weed-control program; or what color annuals he plants at the clubhouse. I will be providing some insight into the real person that we in South Florida affectionately call "Machine-Gun Al."

When you meet Al in person, he is friendly but somewhat distant. He will shake your hand, grunt a greeting acknowledging of your presence, and then look away if not immediately engaged in a conversation. But, if you possess information that interests him, be prepared for an interrogation of rapid-fire intensity.

Al will stare at your face, study your expressions, and pump every last bit of information out of you until every important aspect has been revealed, and you

have strongly stated your case.

Al's interrogations approach the intensity of a detective grilling a perpetrator. Your voice will tremble, beads of sweat will roll

and accurately, and be prepared to support your statements. Don't be surprised. This is actually how Al treats all of his friends!

Al's experience in turf

and then decided on golf course turf management. During summers Al worked at the school for faculty members, Drs. Bing and Hyde. After receiving his degree, Al decided to move to Florida and get a job on a golf course.

When informed that Al was moving to Florida, his mother was obviously concerned that he might move in with her in New Port Richey. So she visited Fred Tucker at Timber Oaks Golf Club and told him that Al was moving to Florida with a degree in turf and that he was looking for a job on a golf course. Tucker contacted Harvey Phillips at the Biltmore Belleview G.C., Dan Hall at Countryside C.C., and Chuck McCracken at Beacon Woods.

Al left Long Island on a Saturday, arrived in Florida on Sunday, closed on a house on Monday, started looking for work on Thursday, was hired at Beacon Woods on Friday and started work the following Monday. That is typical Al Ross intensity.

Al started at Beacon Woods as the assistant superintendent and worked there for five years. Beacon Woods was at the early construction stage, so he had the opportunity to work through grow-in. Al received his first superintendent's job at Inverness where he stayed for two and one half years.

Al then moved to Sunrise C.C. as superintendent and has remained there for the past 19 years.

down your temple, and the questions will be drilled relentlessly. Don't be alarmed. Al really is a warm, friendly person. But give him the information he wants, give it to him quickly

started at Farmingdale State University in Long Island, N.Y. He was searching for a major that would include his love for working outdoors. He tried horticulture and sod production,

## Machine Gun Al's Bullet Points for Young Bucks

### Work Ethic

- Take your time and enjoy your experiences
- Don't expect to go anywhere fast.
- Be loyal to your employer.
- If your job performance and results impress your boss, greater opportunities will develop for you.
- Focus on the benefits of long term employment.

### Association Involvement

- Fellowship and relationships.
- Education.
- It is your duty to make a commitment to your local chapter, and to help out in any way possible.
- If you are a veteran superintendent with years of experience, you have a responsibility to help out the assistants and inexperienced superintendents by sharing your knowledge and experiences.

### Most Significant Accomplishments

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- Installing computer controlled irrigation system.
- Greens renovation and development of a master plan in 1994 with golf course architect Chuck Ankrom.
- Negotiations with developer of surrounding property which resulted in drainage enhancements, additional waterways and a long term financial commitment.
- Installation of two extra holes that permit 18 holes of golf to be played, when any other two greens are under renovation or aerification.





1999 FGCSA President's Award winner Al Ross, CGCS, Sunrise G.C. was recognized by the South Florida Chapter for his 13 years of service. Photo by Bob Klitz.

Al refers to himself as "The Certified Golf Course Superintendent at Sunrise Country Club," but over the years his responsibilities have grown to include serving in a general manager's capacity. While he oversees all aspects of the golf operation, his focus remains on the golf course itself.

Al's commitment to the South Florida GCSA began in 1986. He was offered the glamorous role of chapter shirt salesman for his first year of duty.

He dragged the big cardboard boxes to every meeting, set up his display table, sold one or two shirts, and then dragged everything back to the car.

He did all this without a single complaint. This was

his assignment, his duty, and he performed it to the best of his ability. Al moved forward through all the officer positions and served as president of the SFGCSA in 1991-92.

He continues to serve on the board, currently assisting with education, and will remain as long as his services are requested. Al feels a need to contribute to an organization that has provided such a positive influence on his career, and his performance as a superintendent.

He feels that the exposure to new ideas at the monthly meetings are an invaluable source of information. He has consistently returned to his club after chapter meetings with money-saving ideas

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