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TAKING A LOOK BACK

Whatever the Title, We Still Keep the Green

By David A. Court, CGCS



As the GCSAA is celebrating its 75th anniversary, I can't help but think of all the progress that has been made in our industry over the years. Even though I haven't been in the business for 75 years, it has been more than 30 years since graduating from high school and taking on that summer job at Fort Lauderdale Country Club.

Back in the early 70s the professional on the course maintenance was commonly known as the "green keeper." Ken Roberts, then the green keeper at FLCC was kind enough to give me my first job on the course. He was also the person who initiated the idea of pursuing a career as a golf course superintendent. He didn't lead me in the wrong direction.

In the last 30 years so many changes have taken place in the way golf turf has been maintained. I think it's worth noting how these changes have taken place through the years. I'm sure many reading this will relate to the article and perhaps someone will add some personal experiences in a later issue of the magazine.

Jacobsen, Toro, Roseman and National were the common names in mowing equipment. As I recall, Jacobsen walk mowers with their two-cycle engines were commonly seen along with Toro Series IV as the typical mower used on greens. Greens were mowed as low as 1/2 inch and the stimpmeter was not heard of at that time.

Back then Tifgreen 328 was the grass of choice on greens but Tifdwarf was the new up-and-coming grass for the newer courses. Triplex mowers with wide balloon tires were coming out in the early 70s. These mowers would take the place of walkers on greens in order to save on manpower. One triplex could do what three or four walk mow operators could do. For many of the clubs today it has become more desirable to go back to the use of walk mowers. As the saying goes "What goes around comes around." The triplex still has many uses from mowing tees, collars, verticutting use and at times we see it as a fairway mower for professional tournaments and to create special mowing patterns.

Remember the F-10, Parkmaster, HF-15 and HTM 175? They did a great job replacing pull frames of 5-, 7-, or 9-gang mowers once used on fairways and rough. I'm still using our HF-15 occasionally to scalp down fairways and to reduce thatch build-up.

Topdressing of greens has gone through a metamorphosis not only in the materials used, but the in equipment that applies these materials. Years ago it was not uncommon to use a 70/30 mix on greens. Organic matter was comprised of Florida or Canadian Peat to a product of the sugar cane industry known as Doc Anderson's Topdressing. Equipment used for topdressing has also made a big change. The walk-behind top dresser that would take all day to complete topdressing of nine holes has been replaced with Terra Toppers, Dakota and Tee-Crop equipment that gets 18 greens topdressed in as little as two hours.

Battling insects seemed much easier when we have products like Aldrin and Chlorodane. These were great on mole crickets and grubs as well as other turf pests. The replacements for these seem to be targeted at single pests and less broad spectrum. I'm referring to Chipco Choice, Merit and other pyrethroid products.

A great deal of progress has been made in educating the maintenance staff on the proper way of handling pesticides and other toxic substances used the work place. Today it is expected that the handler of toxic substances will take proper

'I think the area that has made the biggest impact in turf maintenance has been irrigation.'

precautions using personnel protective equipment. This was not always the case. Years ago the practice of spaying greens could involve a three men. One man would spray with a "Spray Hawk" while two men would handle 150 ft. of hose and keep it out of the way. Today sprayers are vehicles with booms that can be raised by the push of a button in order to follow ground contours. It all depends on the bells and whistles on equipment.

I think the area that has made the biggest impact in turf maintenance has been irrigation. Courses have gone from manual, quick coupler, single row systems to the sophisticated com-

puterized systems of today. The antiquated system of the past required night water men to drive from fairway to fairway, plugging in sprinklers on a time table that was as variable as the person doing the job. Superintendents just hoped that the water man would not fall asleep on the job or talk to their girlfriends on the phone too long; otherwise wet spots were sure to occur. I'm sure that superintendents of yesteryear could write a chapter in a book about night water men and some of the characters that they had working for them.

Irrigation systems being installed today require far more technical expertise. Automatic systems years ago were designed to run in about 10-12 hours to fulfill maximum ET requirements. Now these systems can water the same amount in as little as five hours. Larger pumps stations (VFD), larger mainline pipe sizing and computerized control have made a tremendous difference. The two leaders in irrigation technology continue to upgrade software to the point where what was good six or seven years ago is obsolete today. Isn't that the way many things are though? That's progress.

The maintenance staff has also made some changes over the years. In the 1970s it was very common to see more women working on the golf course. At Colony West where I worked on the crew for Richard Lemmel, we had the best crew of all that I have been associated with. We had a crew of 12, six women and six men, and we maintained 36 holes. Everyone worked great together.

Today we see much more of the Hispanic and Haitian labor force throughout South Florida. It is so important for clubs to have someone in a management position who can translate and make sure that instructions are clearly understood. Education training films in both English and Spanish have become very popular. One series of videos has been produced by FGCSA Past President Darren Davis and Paul Latshaw. Safety training films have also become a major part of today's operation. Many clubs today employ a person who serves as the human resources director who handles many of the tasks of employee relations, insurance problems, employment and termination's.

In the past 30 years or so many changes have occurred in the role of the golf course superintendent. As I stated earlier some of the readers will relate to this article and others getting started in their careers will see it as a bit of history.

Happy 75th Anniversary to the GCSAA. I hope to make it for the 100th. Let's see where progress takes us in the next 25 years.

David Court, CGCS is superintendent, Boca Lago CC; 561-482-5017; fax 561-487-9776; courtcgcs@aol.com



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1st Place: Welcome to Bent Tree by Tom Biggy, Bent Tree C.C.



2nd Place: Tabebuia in Bloom by Erik F. Jorgensen, Royal Palm Y&CC

Formal Landscape

Category 2 - includes annuals, shrubs, trees, entrance and tee sign beds

2002 Florida Green Photo Contest Rules

Easy Rules

Submissions for judging must be a color or black and white photograph or a slide. No computer print outs of digital photos will be accepted. Only one entry per category. Don't make us choose.

Photo must be taken on an FGCSA member's course and taken by the member or a member of his/her staff.

Attach a label to the back of the photograph which identifies the category, course and photographer. Do not write directly on the back of the photograph. Attach the photo or slide to a piece of 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper with a loop of masking tape for easy removal for handling.

A caption identifying the category, course and photographer should be typed or printed on the paper below the photograph.

Judging will be done by a panel of FGCSA members not participating in the contest.

Mail entries in a bend proof package/mailer to Joel Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando, FL 32819, no later than August 1, 2002.

Prizes

1st Place (\$100), 2nd Place \$50 in each category
Editor's Choice - Best Overall Photo - \$100
All winning entries will be published in the Florida Green.

Categories

Category 1 - Wildlife on the Course: includes mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects.

Category 2 - Formal Landscape: includes annual beds, shrubs, trees, and entrance and tee sign beds.

Category 3 - Native Landscape: includes native plant beds, aquatic vegetation plantings, natural areas and any other use of native plants on the course.

Category 4 - Scenic Hole: includes sunrises, sunsets, frosts, storms or any other interesting view of a golf hole.

Words cannot adequately convey the anger and disappointment I feel after learning about the proba-

Turfgrass - The Easy Target

MARK MY WORDS



Mark Jarrell, CGCS

ble additional cuts to the IFAS budget proposed by Gov. Jeb Bush and the Florida Legislature. Twenty years of slow but steady progress building support for the University of Florida's turfgrass program through FGCSA and FTGA activism may be wiped away with the stroke of a pen by the time you are actually reading this. The Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center, along with the Turf Mountain and the USGA green built and supported by Florida's golf course superintendents, is likely to be one of the first victims, but certainly not the last.

Here are the figures under consideration. Of the current \$1.3 billion shortfall in state revenues, half is to be cut from education. \$104 million is to come from our state universities. IFAS may receive up to \$7 million in cutbacks, though V.P. Mike Martin hopes that it will end up being no more than \$2 million.

In Dr. Martin's own words, "Coupled with the previous \$2.6 million in cuts received by UF/IFAS at the beginning of this fiscal year, additional deep cuts to the UF/IFAS budget proposed by the House and Senate during the first special session will result in immediate layoffs and facility closures statewide. It might be possible to avoid immediate closures and layoffs if actual new cuts in the second special session do not exceed \$2 million on top of what's already been made. In avoiding immediate closures, UF/IFAS would be in a position this year to begin an orderly transition of reorganization and consolidation of facilities throughout the state. We view

this to be an inopportune time to disinvest in the agricultural and natural resources industries, which are major parts of the state's economy."

While it may seem unpatriotic and irresponsible to criticize our leadership during a state and national crisis, our industry needs to reflect on how Florida's politicians have viewed us since the first big IFAS budget cuts back in 1987 - long before the current emergency. Think of all the initiatives we've championed over the years and the total lack of respect shown and support given by our state government. Agriculture and the green industry, which includes turfgrass, doesn't seem to be important to our representatives in Tallahassee anymore, despite our continued growth and economic value to Florida. Politicians don't seem to understand that Florida's appeal, and the growth it has experienced, is due to its wealth of natural resources. People come to Florida to enjoy its weather, beaches, fishing, wildlife, and golf courses, more than they come for Disney World and Sea World.

IFAS provides the research and education needed for the protection and enhancement of Florida's natural resources. Properly funding IFAS is an investment in Florida's future. What's the old saying? You give a man a fish and he's fed for the day, but if you teach him to fish, he's fed for life. Our elected officials cannot have a clear vision of Florida's future if they do not understand what the bricks and mortar are that make up the foundation of this state's economy.

I'm confident that turf will get high consideration with Mike Martin in charge of IFAS, but these proposed cuts are unbelievably severe. We need to rally behind him to make the best of a bad situation and keep the turfgrass program moving forward. We have too much invested and too much to lose if the program once again falters.

Let's hope that we can somehow come together as an industry - a green industry and not just a golf industry - to map an effective political strategy so that our legislature one day is made up of officials who recognize Florida's true wealth and understand how best to protect it.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

This is a call for articles for the 2002 issues of the Florida Green.

Contact Joel D. Jackson, editor for more information. Phone or Fax: 407-248-1971. Email: flgm@aol.com. All slides and photographs should include identification of persons in the picture and the name of the photographer.

Hands on Topics: Share your best practices and tips for these upcoming topics. Photographs or slides are encouraged.

Spring 2002 - Managing Summer Stress on Greens

Summer 2002 - The Value of Maintenance Standards and Long Range Planning

Fall 2002 - The Role and Responsibilities of the Equipment Manager

Spotlight: People and events making news in Florida. From award winners to chapter tournaments and other accomplishments. Send in your story.

Superintendents Journal: Personal observations or experiences related to any phase of the turf management profession including balancing family life with work.

Professional Development: General management topics beyond turf. Examples: Education, training, facilities operations, personnel, computers, etc.

Industry News: News items of interest to Florida superintendents from allied associations in the turf/horticultural

industry.

Opinion: Exactly what it means. Article voicing your point of view on any topic concerning Florida superintendents.

Research: A section reserved primarily for university and technical authors to report on research results within the industry. Also reports of practical on-course testing.

Rub of the Green: Articles and anecdotes with a humorous twist.

Stewardship: Superintendents are invited to submit articles and ideas about environmental issues and initiatives at their courses.

Editor's Fun Facts

It's been a tough year and there's plenty to think about - from terrorism to the economy - but I've spent enough time worrying about things I can't control and I'm looking for some humor to brighten up my attitude and fend off depression. The

approaching holidays and a new year just ahead are enough of a reason to... "Roll up your troubles in an old kit bag and smile, smile, smile," as the song goes. So I'm packing away the soap box for this issue and we're just going to have some fun.

I wondered how I would fill in the Fun Facts questionnaire we've been running on the superintendents in our cover stories lately. So here's my version:

Car: 2001 Toyota Camry LE. I tend to own cars for a long time and drive them till they drop, which is easy when you buy American. I traded in my eight-year old Altima for the Camry which had 6,000 miles on it. I've owned 3 American cars and 3 Japanese cars. Guess which ones lasted longer. Sorry, Detroit. But I don't feel guilty; cars are manufactured internationally these days. I think about an SUV, but my Scottish blood and gas prices keep me cruising on four cylinders. Besides, when I travel I rent American.

Last good movie I saw: Monsters, Inc., I don't know why they call these animated films kid-die movies. The jokes and one-liners sound like something from Saturday Night Live, The Tonight Show or David Letterman.

I stay home to watch: That's Life, Gilmore Girls, Ed and West Wing. Good writing is good writing. I've given up on sports except for the Super Bowl, the last game of the World Series, the Final Four, etc. I still follow golf because those guys don't get paid unless they perform. The rest of the pro cry baby millionaires and semi-pro (collegiate) athletes have forgotten their blessings and do really stupid things. I hate to watch stupid rich people play games.

I've been reading: "Too Lazy To Work, Too Nervous To Steal" - a book about being a writer; "The O'Reilly Factor" and "The No Spin

Zone" by Bill O'Reilly; "Band of Brothers" and "D-Day" by Steven Ambrose; Writer's Digest magazines and holiday catalogs from Sharper Image, Harry & David, Swiss Colony and Victoria's Secret.

Favorite meal: The rib platter from Choctaw Willie's in old historic Winter Garden. Tastes great. Priced right. Actually I love too many kinds of food to have just one favorite.

Favorite performers: John Denver and Billy Joel for all the right reasons. Meg Ryan and Julia Roberts for all the wrong reasons.

Prized possession: My sense of humor. Let's not argue. We're supposed to be having fun here.

Personal heroes: Golf course superintendents who do so much, for so many with so little and so few to help.

Nobody knows that I: Am Bob Sanderson's younger brother. My mother takes the Fifth Amendment every time I ask if was I adopted. Check out our profiles. Talk about limited genetic combinations.

I'm better than anyone when it comes to: Channel surfing with the TV remote, I have not seen a commercial in the past five years. Madison Avenue is trying to outlaw remote controls.

If I could do it over: I could break 80 every time I played golf.

I'd give anything to meet: A GCSAA president who didn't change jobs while serving on the board.

My fantasy is to: Be a writer and travel. Oh wait, that's what I do. Hmm...be careful what you wish for.

The one thing I can't stand is: People talking while I'm interrupting. Frivolous lawsuits. Liars. Cheaters. Oh wait. That's four things.

If I could change one thing about myself: It would be my place in the time-space continuum. I'm not entirely pleased with the current molecular configuration that I inhabit. May the force be with you.

The words that best describe me: Fifty-nine, wrinkled, gray haired, overweight and out-of-shape. See above.

Happy Holidays to one and all and regardless of your faith or denomination may the God you worship bless and keep you and yours till we meet again.

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS Editor

'My fantasy is to: Be a writer and travel. Oh wait, that's what I do. Hmm...be careful what you wish for.'

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1994-95 overseeded Bermuda greens--University of Arizona.

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of all Poa trivs"--putting greens evaluation--1997-98 Mississippi State University.

Cypress

"Highest mean for turf color"

1996-97 putting green overseeding trial, Clemson University.

"Highest quality rating"

of all entries in the 1996 Bermuda Triangle Research Center, Palm Springs, California.