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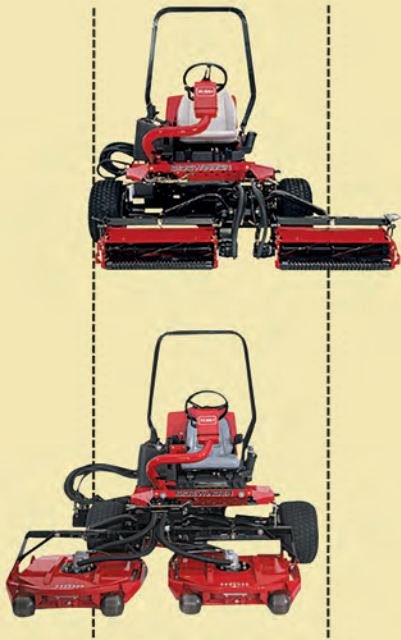
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Ondo's neighbor to the north, Stuart Leventhal at the Interlachen C.C. is a study in contrast as the private-club members want fast greens. Leventhal said whenever discussing greens management, the first thing that needs to be mentioned is the age and type of grass so everything can be put in the proper context. Interlachen's greens are seven-year old Tifdwarf greens. The course opened in 1975 so these

***No one ever accused golfers of being rational or prudent. They can be brutal when the ecosystem of a putting surface gets out of whack and poor playing conditions manifest themselves.***

are second- or third-generation greens. Leventhal has been there since 1985. He currently has a chipping green planted in TifEagle for the members to evaluate a potential conversion to an ultradwarf surface in the future.

Leventhal's members aren't as much concerned with green color as they are with smooth, fast putting surfaces, so his mandate is to keep them quick while also keeping them healthy. Like all good superintendents who have to keep their greens near the edge, Leventhal keeps an eye on the weather and adjusts his routines as needed so as not to intentionally stress the grass.

With an average height of cut near .100 inch that means really paying attention to what's going on. The height is lowered to .09 inch for special tournament conditions and don't stay there more than a few days. With low mowing heights, any aggressive grooming or verticutting practices are limited to the active growing season and taper off in the cool months.

During the warm months, vertigroomers and brushes help stand up the grass for a clean cut to produce the needed speed. Leventhal's number-one tool for speed management is to double cut the greens. He finds that's the most effective and least stressful way to affect speed. A typical tournament greens preparation might be to double cut with triplex mowers followed by double-cutting with walking mowers with brushes followed by single- or double-rolling with triplex rollers. Yes, they are quick, but that fits the

membership's desires.

Leventhal used to believe in the lean-and-mean school of fertility to get faster greens using only 6-8 pounds of Nitrogen per year, but he found he was battling too much turf stress and so he has upped his totals to 10-12 pounds of N per year and now grooms a much healthier surface for speed control. A typical program during warm season

might be .5 - .75 lb. N/1000 sq. ft. every two or three weeks in a granular fertilizer. During cooler weather the program shifts to more foliar feeding with .1 lb. N/1000 sq. ft. in alternating blends of 20-20-20, iron, and a minor nutrient package.

Leventhal has also gotten away from the old aggressive Mat-Away verticutting practice and shifted to a schedule of more frequent but light verticutting, vertigrooming and topdressing cycles two or three times a month, depending on conditions. Aerification is accomplished by using deep tines in the spring and quadra-tines in the fall. A Sisis slicer is also used in the summer during the rainy season to help the greens dry out.

I haven't been ignoring putting green management on the new ultradwarf grasses, but the more I listen, the more obvious it becomes that the book on these new varieties is still a work in progress. The early fears were that these aggressive thatch producers would require drastic measures to keep the biomass manageable. After some preliminary assaults with severe deep verticutting, people like Matt Taylor growing Champion at Bonita Bay East and now Royal Poinciana found that a regimen of lighter but more frequent verticutting did quite well. The key is always to watch out for the weather and don't stress the plant when it doesn't have good growing conditions to recover. That means getting the most aggressive management practices done as early in the spring as possible. Late summer's tropical-storm season can be very

stressful on the greens without the added injury of verticutting.

Bob Randquist, CGCS at the Boca Rio C.C. told me at the GCSAA conference in Atlanta that learning a new management program to deal with converting from Tifdwarf to TifEagle can be made a little easier by taking the GCSAA Managing Ultradwarf Greens seminar presented by Drs. John Cisar of Florida and Dave Kopek of Arizona State. Randquist said the seminar helped to speed up his learning curve and avoid a lot of problems.

One of the suggestions from the seminar was to remove every other blade from your verticut reels and go two ways on the green. The stolons are so thick in the ultradwarfs that a standard verticutter setup is essentially doing a severe scalp job on the stolons instead of a therapeutic thinning.

Also because of the feared thatch build up, the initial fertility programs tended to be of the lean-and-mean school and, just as Leventhal found out on his greens, it's better to work with a healthy turf plant than one that is anemic. That's especially true if you are going to stress it with some low cuts for special events.

Because to the dense growth habit of the ultradwarf varieties, foliar feeding is the most effective and popular means of supplying nutrients. Granular blends are still used, but are more effective when the turf has been opened up by verticutting and aerification. Sometimes even water penetration can be a problem on the tight turf, so regular spiking is another practice that has proven to be effective.

Perhaps an even more basic concept when discussing ultradwarf putting surfaces is undulations and surface contours. If you have greens with severe humps and bumps and your club is on a fast track to re-grass with an ultradwarf, take five minutes and consider your new mowing heights. The 1/8-inch-and-lower effective cutting heights cannot be achieved practically on severely sloping greens without scalping. It may take more than just cutting off the old turf with a sod cutter and throwing down the new sprigs. Golf course designers have to modify their putting surfaces to accommodate these new parameters.

When it comes to tackling putting green management, don't ever forget your greatest source of information - your fellow superintendent who may have already broken the trail you are now following.

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'JUNIOR TIPS'

# Photo Gallery Part 2

Darren J. Davis

Here's Part Two of my Junior Tips, which we began in the Winter issue. They don't need a lot of explanation, just imagination, and a willingness to innovate and try new ideas that might save some time and money.

*Photos by Darren Davis.*



**Working at the Car Wash**

*Want to make cleaning golf course equipment a little more fun for the staff? We all know the sizable investment that is made on golf course equipment these days as well as the value in keeping the equipment clean and in good working order. At Limestone Springs in Alabama a mini car wash was installed in the wash down area. The cleaners, wax and distribution equipment is located on an inside wall with the selector switch and overhead spray boom attached to the same wall on the outside of the structure.*



**Where's My Tool Dude?**

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By Don Benham

What is the old saying? I've got good news and I've got bad news, which do you want first? Let's start with bad news.

Several newspapers in the state have started their annual attack on golf courses and chemical use again. The articles generally quote somebody who makes scientific-sounding comments that are based on opinions.

In Manatee County the school board has decided to buy some land from the University of Florida to build a new high school. The land they are

facts. For example, how much water do we actually use? We are seen as heavy water users. You can create your own grassroots support and become one of the people contacted before they actually publish an article.

More Good news. I attended a Treasure Coast GCSA meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at Port St. Lucie. The meeting started at 4 p.m. and had a great agenda. Opening speaker was Kurt Kuebler, immediate past president of the Florida Club Managers Association.

Kuebler is the general manager of Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter. He spoke on employee relations and methods to improve them. The club even has a scholarship fund for children of employees and is funded by members. He conducts weekly meetings with department heads, so all departments could share what was happening that week. He praised Mark Heater, the golf superintendent, for his leadership ability. Kuebler was an excellent speaker and gave at least 15 workable suggestions.

John Foy spoke not only on the weather but, on losing some chemicals and cautions us on how to use MSMA. He said methyl bromide will probably be available past 2005, which was good news. He classified nematodes today as our number-one pest problem.

National Golf Foundation's Barry Frank gave an overview of where golf was heading in number of rounds played and courses under construction.

McGladrey and Pullen CPA firm talked on how accounting decisions affect course superintendents also. For example to buy or lease equipment they passed out a complete booklet on trends of private golf clubs including average cost per hole for maintenance broken down by region. It includes a good checklist for superintendents.

This program was put together by Kevin Downing and I would highly recommend it to all chapters. The good news is how good the program was and the idea of putting it on at 4:00 PM in the afternoon. The bad news is it was under-attended.

*(Editor's note: The Palm Beach Post also recently ran articles on the Audubon ACSP Workshops and the results of the Florida Golf Economic Impact Study.)*

*For information about the author, see inside cover.*

## Harrell's Founder Loses Lengthy Battle with Cancer at 74

Harrell's, Inc. Chairman of the Board Jack R. Harrell, Sr., 74 died March 28 in Lakeland following a lengthy battle with cancer.



Harrell spent more than 50 years serving the turf and ornamental industry. His work began when his parents purchased a feed store in 1941 in downtown Lakeland. That location served local farm and ranch

customers in greater Lakeland for many years. Harrell was thrust into leadership of the business following his father's sudden death in 1964. The company soon expanded by adding five retail locations across west central Florida. The focus of the business during the 60s and 70s was lawn and garden supplies.

Harrell then directed the company into the

## In Memoriam

### A Bull Gator in God's Garden

An obituary elsewhere in this issue will tell you the facts of the life and passing of Jack R. Harrell, Sr., but it cannot begin to tell the story of what Jack meant to the industry and to so many individuals in the business. I cannot speak for all of them. I can only tell my story.

When I left Disney in 1988 for a brief bout with bentgrass at the Isleworth G&CC, it was then I got to know and appreciate Jack Harrell as a supplier, a man and a friend. The fact that Jack mentored me as I battled bentgrass in Central Florida will not come as a surprise to many long-time superintendents in Florida. His helping hand has lifted many of us out of the doldrums of despair and confusion, and guided us along the path to success.

Mr. Harrell knew his own products. He fiddled around with them on his home bermudagrass lawn, so he could discuss the successes and limitations of each product. It was practical, cracker-barrel agronomy at its finest, and it was free for the asking. We asked often.

The most honest and truthful sentiment I can offer is the warm feeling and sense of ease that would come over a person when they engaged Mr. Harrell in conversation, whether it was business or personal. To me he had the charisma of an Arnold Palmer. He was someone who made you feel special and important in that moment.

I couldn't tell you about his business savvy in the terms of bean counters and annual reports. All indications were that he was a shrewd and infinitely honest businessman. He would never fail to thank you and tell you he appreciated you and not just your business. All I know as a customer is that the service and support provided by him personally or by his representatives was always superior and customer loyalty ran both ways.

The industry has been made much better because of him. The Harrell's Turf Academy is an almost-unprecedented event, where the company literally pays for your education, entertainment and meals for two days each year. His sponsorship of turf causes and events was always generous. He touched so many of us along his life's journey, that he earned the greatest riches of a lifetime - the love and respect of his fellow man.

Today I am sad at losing my friend and a great mentor in our business, but I am heartened to know that Mr. Harrell has been able to lay down the burden of his illness. And I can see the twinkle in his eye as the old Bull Gator takes a place of honor in God's garden in paradise.

Joel Jackson  
March 28, 2003

# Good News - Bad News

## BENHAM'S BEAT



Don Benham

buying is part of the university's agricultural station on State Road 70. The newspaper has written several articles saying how deadly the land is. Here are a few quotes from articles submitted to the paper. "To use pesticide applications on neighbors' yards or nearby golf courses are chemical attacks - surely not as severe as terrorists but chemical attacks nonetheless. Every day is code red to us."

The last time I heard this particular lady speak was at a department of health meeting in Orlando where she had also said, "Golf courses are toxic holding ponds waiting to poison us." Many times the same people are quoted all across the state pushing their agenda to stop all chemical pesticide, herbicide, insecticide and fungicide applications.

There is a direct tie-in here to scare people into passing local ordinances that these items are in our drinking water and the ground children play on, and the real culprits are golf courses.

Enough of the bad news. What is the good news?

The *Palm Beach Post*, which has been very critical of golf courses, published a great article on golf courses and the difficulty of growing grasses this winter. They quoted John Foy and several golf course superintendents, including Mike Ballard at Abacoa Golf Course, Ray Kimberly at West Palm Beach Country Club and Mark Jarrell at Palm Beach National. I know that after the negative publicity two years ago, Mark Jarrell has been in contact with the paper to urge more balanced articles. His direct contact I feel has changed the way the paper reports about golf.

If your local paper writes something very negative that is not true, take the time to meet the reporter. Not to beat on him, but to provide him with





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specialty turf and ornamental market, beginning in the early 1980s. He oversaw construction of the company's first manufacturing plant and distribution center, which began operating in Lakeland in 1984. Through his initiative as chairman of the board, Harrell's has grown to be a recognized industry leader, serving turf customers across the Southeast and around the world. Harrell's serves the ornamental marketplace in all regions east of the Rocky Mountains. Manufacturing plants are now located in Alabama and South Carolina in addition to the corporate headquarters in Florida.

Known for his integrity and for his deep concern for people, Harrell was often consulted by industry associates throughout his home state. Superintendents would often request Harrell's assistance and advice regarding challenges faced on their golf courses. He received the Florida turf industry's highest honor in 1999 when he was awarded the prestigious Wreath of Grass Award. He also received the Larry Kamphaus Award in 2001, presented by the Central Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Aside from work, Harrell's interests included golf, aviation, Lakeland High School and University of Florida athletics, teaching Sunday School, keeping up with his active 93-year-old mother and following the exploits of his large family.

He was a member of Lone Palm Golf Club in Lakeland and Black Diamond Golf & Country Club in Lecanto, Fla. He was a charter member and deacon of Lakeside Baptist Church in

Lakeland, where he taught a men's Sunday School class for more than 40 years. He was a member of the Lakeland High School Century Club and was a Bull Gator at the University of Florida. He is a former chairman of the board of Lakeland Regional Medical Center and was a member of the Sixth Man Club at Florida Southern College.

Jack Harrell, Sr. is survived by his wife of 48 years, Norma; his mother, Lucile, Lakeland; by his sons, Jack, Jr., Lakeland, president and CEO of Harrell's; Fred, San Francisco, Cal.; daughters Susie Wilson, Lakeland, and Mary Lu Strawbridge, Ocala; and by 14 grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Lakeland Christian School, 1111 Forest Park Street, Lakeland, FL 33803 or to Redeemer Christian School, 155 SW 87th Place, Ocala, FL 34476.

**GCSAA Report**

**GCSAA Considers Relocation to Sunbelt Cities... or Not**

At its December planning meeting, the GCSAA board of directors engaged Chicago-based FPL Associates to narrow the study of the association's potential future headquarters location to three communities: Phoenix, Orlando and Jacksonville. In addition, the board reaffirmed the possibility of GCSAA remaining in Lawrence, Kan.

During the weeks of Jan. 13 and 20, principals of the search firm visited Orlando and Jacksonville to ascertain what opportunities exist for relocation. The consultant's report was provided to the board at the pre-conference board meeting, Feb. 6-7 in Hilton Head, S.C.

Prior to the GCSAA Annual Meeting, a town hall meeting was conducted Feb. 13 at the conference and show to answer questions and discuss issues regarding the relocation feasibility study. Based on the feedback from the meeting, the board of directors decided to remove from the ballot the amendment intended to allow the board to select a headquarters location on behalf of the membership.

In a press conference Mike Wallace, Jon Maddern and Steve Mona pledged to make sure the members would have access to all the information regarding any possible relocation attempt, and play a key role in making the decision. Citing the input and education behind the PDI implementation, the GCSAA leadership promised a similar approach to the relocation discussion. The topic had been awkward to deal with and needed to be made public because everyone is very sensitive to the impact on the GCSAA staff.

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