

GCSAA WEBCASTING

Join us in February....

USGA Green Section Reports:

**Recovering from Winterkill
Feb. 3 at Noon, Central**

Three USGA regional agronomists will share their strategies during this 90-minute session, launching the new USGA/GCSAA series.

Lunch & Learn series:

**Using Groomers to Condition Your Turf
Feb. 9 at Noon, Central**

presented live from the education conference in Orlando

Milt Engelke, Ph.D. will share research results, including photos that compare field plot conditions.

Live @ 5IVE series:

**Rescue 911 for Turfgrass Frostbite & Heat Exhaustion
Feb. 22 at 5 p.m., Central**

Jack Fry, Ph.D., gives you the details you need to know about these seasonal stresses. Our new time slot helps you end the day on a positive note.

**Seating is limited! See the complete calendar at www.gcsaa.org
or call 800-472-7878 to register by phone.**

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young. Additionally they may cause the adults to abandon the colony. I have only had snake predation twice in eight years among all the colonies that I monitor. In both cases I found the snakes early. They were sleeping off their meal of martin young. Normally, I promote snakes on golf courses and I go out of my way not to kill them, but when they are actively eating their way through a colony I will dispatch them. An alternative is to remove and relocate them far away from the colony in an appropriate habitat.

Crows and owls are major predators of purple martin colonies. Literature suggests that almost all martin colonies have some crow and owl predation. Unless you regularly check your apartments you probably will never know this is occurring. It is very important to use crow and owl guards on apartment houses that have front porches. These porches make it easy for these predators to pluck martin young from their compartments. For the 12 aluminum apartments I use, a gridwork is available that permits martins to pass through but not the larger birds. Prior to gridwork installation, increasing crow populations on Naples Bay almost wiped out the bay's purple martin colonies. Gourds, especially the oversized plastic ones that are now available, make it very difficult for these predators. No guards are needed on the gourds.

Children and Purple Martins

Not only do golf courses and purple martins go together, so do children and purple martins. Getting children and martins together on a golf course is a win-win situation.

A while back, Olde Florida Golf Club sponsored one of my purple martin apartments for the Laurel Oak Elementary School. For a couple of springs, the students helped me get the apartment ready for returning birds. During the outings I would present a short program on martins in the field. In early May I would lower the apartment for the students to see the eggs and young. We would then return to the classroom for a brief slide show. Both the teachers and students were extremely positive about these activities.

When teaching bird watching to fifth graders, I found purple martins to be good subjects for beginning birders to observe and practice binocular skills. Student powers of observation are heightened while determining the difference between males and female martins and between first-year and older breeding adults. Because martins are "in your face" birds they provide an outstanding opportunity to discuss many aspects of bird behavior and biology while at the colony location.

Once a golf course has three or four



Martin houses with porches might need protective grillwork to protect young martins from crow and owl predation. Author and biologist George McBath is shown here with the type of aluminum apartment house he uses on golf courses.



School children can learn a lot about purple martins and environmental stewardship on golf course by helping to install and monitor colonies on golf courses. Photo by George McBath.

colonies going, it should be possible, for a period of six or so weeks, to have four or five students weekly lower the apartments and take egg and young data. In the classroom, students can present their data and follow and compare each colony for the study period. Mathematical skills can be practiced by determining means, modes and averages for each colony and the entire golf course. Also there would be an opportunity for students to relate field observations of martin behavior (and golf course stewardship) to the rest of the class.

Rewards and Satisfaction

One of the best rewards a superintendent can receive after putting up a purple martin apartment comes when the residents and golfers

see what wonderful entertainment martins can provide and ask to put up their own apartments. In the Naples area this has occurred at Pelican Bay, Marco Island, Bonita Bay West and Pelican Marsh country clubs. Both Stonebridge and Windstar now have more than seven colonies on each of their courses. Resident interest provides an opportunity for superintendents to ask residents for help in caring for and monitoring the course colonies.

Other courses in the Naples area having success with purple martin apartments that I have supplied include Colliers Reserve, Old Colliers, Bonita Bay East, Tiburon, West Bay, Wildcat Run, Quail West, Twin Eagles, Naples Golf & Beach Club, Eagle Creek, Country Club of Naples and The Colony.

Additional sources for information are local experts, Web sites and the Purple Martin Conservation Association located at the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, PA 16444. Phone: 814-734-4420. Web site: pmca@edinboro.edu or www.purplemartin.org. This organization is dedicated to the conservation of purple martins through scientific research, state-of-the-art wildlife management techniques and public education.

The PMCA publishes an outstanding quarterly magazine, The Purple Martin Update. This quarterly contains articles on martin biology, answers landlord questions about problems and shares landlord experiences. The magazine is known for its outstanding color photographs and representations.

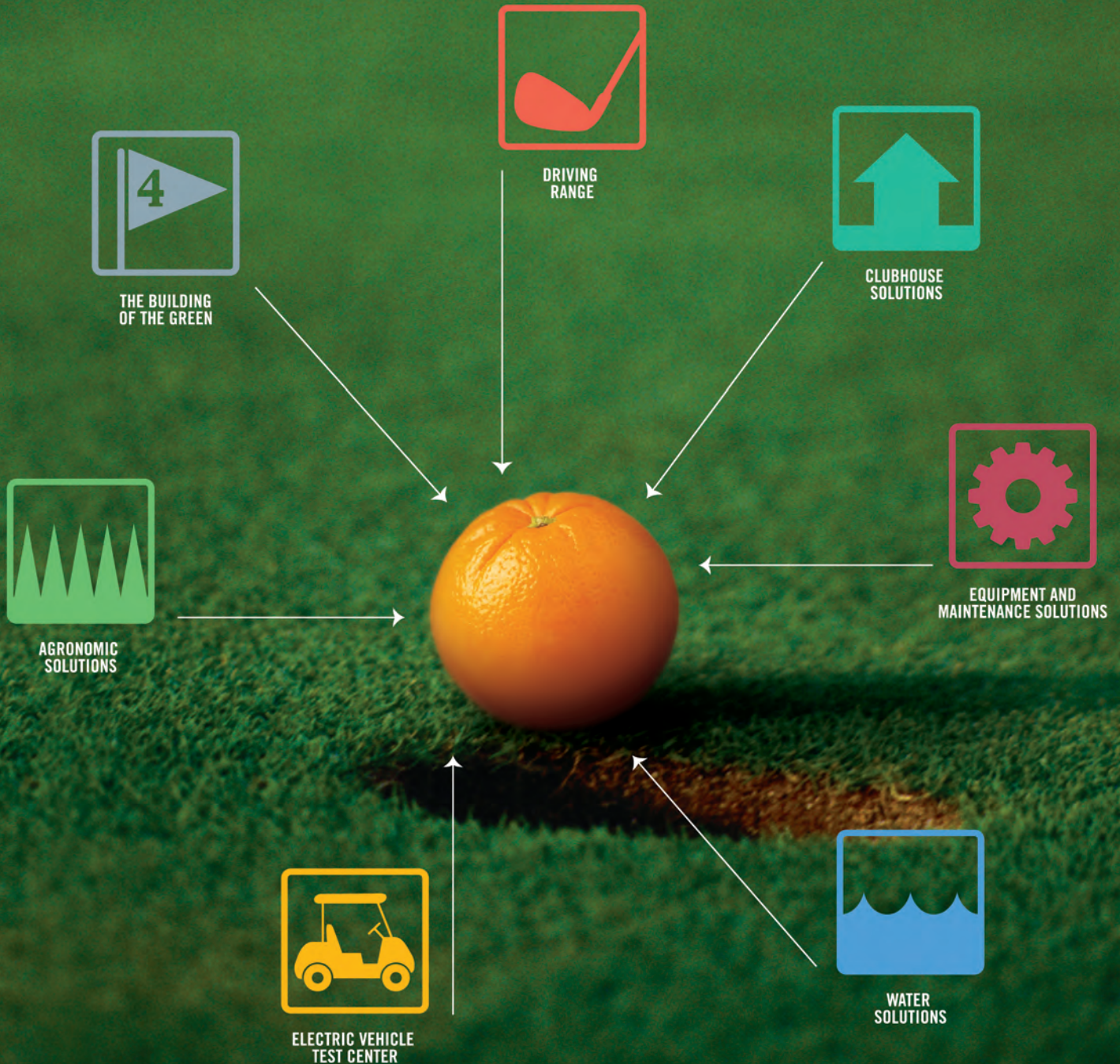


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Mini Ring Disease

Ring Around the Collars

By Brian Unruh, Ph.D.

Over the past several years, superintendents from Memphis to West Palm Beach have

observed small, ring-like symptoms on their bermudagrass putting greens (Fig. 2). Symptoms typically begin to show up in the springtime, with small rings and/or patches of damaged turf. As the

season progresses, the rings and patches slowly grow in size or disappear completely, or disappear and then reappear later in the season. At the onset of bermudagrass dormancy, the rings and patches become most pronounced and superintendents and golfers are forced to live with the unsightliness through the busy winter season. Because of the nature of the small rings, Dr. Mike Healy of Healy and Associates, Inc., has dubbed the phenomenon “Mini-Ring disease.”

Although ultradwarf bermudagrass varieties are the most common hosts of the unwanted rings, the 2004 season revealed that Tifdwarf and possibly Tifgreen are susceptible as well. Similarly, ring symptoms were thought to be found mainly on high sand content, low cation-exchange-capacity (CEC) putting greens. However, rings have been



Fig. 1. Mini rings seem more pronounced in surface drainage areas and height of cut doesn't seem to matter. Photo by Brian Unruh.



Fig.2. Superintendents begin to see small rings in the spring. They subside during growing season reappear during fall dormancy. Photo by Brian Unruh



Fig. 3. Water droplets are absorbed in non-damaged areas but not in the damaged areas. Photo by Brian Unruh.



Fig. 4. In the spring the overseeding seems to be stimulated within the ring. Photo by Brian Unruh.

sighted on native soil, push-up greens which have higher CECs and higher organic matter content. These conditions suggest that the soil's water-holding and/or nutrient-holding capacity may somehow be involved in the development of this condition.

Larry Stowell, of PACE Turfgrass Research Institute in San Diego, has noted the hydrophobic nature of the mycelium growing over the surface of a sample of TifEagle from Mississippi. In non-damaged areas of the turf, water droplets are immediately absorbed into the thatch, but in damaged areas, the water droplet remains on the turf surface without being absorbed (Fig. 3). In some cases — but not all — superintendents observing the rings on their putting greens regularly use wetting agents.

Superintendents have racked their brains trying to find common denominators but have found exceptions to most hypotheses. Observations that tend to recur are:

- Rings are worse in surface drainage areas (Fig. 1).
- Increased mowing height (collar) does not appear to relieve symptoms (Fig. 1).
- Subtle rings can be masked by increased nitrogen fertility.
- In the spring, the overseed is stimulated in the ring (Fig. 4).

Dr. Stowell states: "The cause of the condition remains a mystery at this point. Although several different fungi have been identified from turf samples (including Rhizoctonia, Curvularia, fairy ring and ectotrophic root-infecting fungi, spring dead spot), no one fungus stands out as the culprit. In some cases, the damaged areas are hydrophobic (water repellent), a condition that can develop due to the growth of a large number of bacteria and/or fungi."

In extensive fungicide research and demonstration trials, the symptoms are not easily relieved via fungicide applications alone. Minimal to no control has been achieved from applications of major turf fungicides including the SI, QoI, benza-midazole, dicarboximide, and multi-site products. To date, the only treatments that appear to alleviate the symptoms are various combinations of nitrogen, peat, zeolite and the humus/manure-based products.

A team of turf scientists, plant pathologists, and industry leaders including Dr. Stowell; Dr. Phil Colbaugh, Texas A&M University; Dr. Phil Harmon, University of Florida; Dr. Healy; Dr. Henry Wetzel, Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc.; Mr. Steve Davis, Bayer Environmental Sciences; and the author are diligently working on this serious turf problem. When more information is learned, it will be made available.

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California Dreamin' in Southwest Florida

By Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

(Editor's note: Stories like the one Kyle Sweet is sharing here is but one more example of the talent, imagination, creativity and adaptability of golf course superintendents everywhere. By displaying a "can do" attitude, superintendents demonstrate their value to their clubs in many unexpected ways. They just don't teach this stuff at turf school.)

Today's golf course superintendent is a far cry from the role filled many years ago. The ris-

Well, for the fun of it, let's add golfer/member relations to that laundry list. Although this may be an area that many of us shy away from, I would like to highlight one great evening at The Sanctuary Golf Club that might just change your mind.

The golf season in Southwest Florida takes place from November to April. Early in the 2003/2004 golf season, a group of five members approached me about hosting a "California Dreamin'" party for more than 200 members at my maintenance facility. Their ideas were excellent and

dred feet from the best beaches on the Gulf Coast, we needed the beach at our front door. With 20 tons of fresh bunker sand delivered, we got it. All of the equipment was removed from the shop. If it wasn't bolted down, it was removed. And we placed the sand throughout the entire equipment-storage area with a front-end loader. A dance floor was created with sand approximately 6 inches deep and, throughout many seating areas, the sand was installed at a 3-inch depth. A bunker rake was used to thoroughly smooth the surface and the result was amazing.



How to build a beach. Start with 20 tons of sand and an empty maintenance building.

ing expectations for turfgrass management, environmental safety, and ongoing labor challenges are enough to keep anyone busy.

without hesitation I began to work with them on the party that took place Feb. 29, 2004.

Although our facility is only a few hun-

That was the easy part. Now, with the sand in place, the members and an interior decorating company sprang into action and decorated both



Bunker rake. Beach rake. What's in a name? It smoothed out our indoor party beach just fine.



The members and interior decorators took over to finish the transformation to a beach scene.

the interior and exterior with palm trees, murals, ceiling coverings, food and beverage tents, bars, and seating for more than 200. Once the band set up, the preparation was complete, and the facility didn't look or feel much like the "shop" we started with earlier in the day.

Fortunately, my family and I were

invited to attend along with my two long-term assistants. We greeted many members attending the party, took photographs, and of course discussed questions or comments about the golf course. The Sanctuary food and beverage department supplied the finest food and drink for the evening and a wonderful time was had by the



From shop to shore, we were now ready to entertain 200 people at the beach party.

members and staff alike.

Now, several weeks later, our department is still hearing the compliments on our cooperative effort with our members and the use of our facility in creating a "California Dreamin'" party that everyone will remember.

2004 Photo Contest Results



First Place – “Old Hickory Main Entrance” by John Stach, Old Hickory G&CC, Ft. Myers



Second Place – “No. 16 Tee Azaleas in Bloom” by Tom Biggy, Bent Tree, Sarasota

Category 2 – Formal Landscape

Formal landscape beds add color and visual appeal to golf courses, but they also require maintenance. Congratulations to the winners:

2005 Photo Contest

Category 1 – Wildlife on the course: includes any critter on the course that walks, flies, swims, slithers or crawls.

Category 2 – Formal Landscaping: includes annuals and ornamental shrubs and trees planted in formal beds on the course or club entrance.

Category 3 – Native Areas: includes beds of native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses used in naturalized areas to reduce turf inputs and aquatic vegetation plantings used to create habitat and protect water quality.

Category 4 – Scenic Hole: includes any view of a golf hole (panoramic or close up) that demonstrates the scenic beauty of a golf course.

Easy Rules

1. Color prints or slides. Prefer prints. Only one entry per category. Digital images: Digital image entries must be taken at a resolution setting of 300 dpi or higher and saved as jpeg or tiff (tif) format images. Images taken, saved and sent at lower resolutions will not qualify for the contest. If you're not sure. Send a print instead.

2. Photo must be taken on an FGCSA member's course. Photo must be taken by an FGCSA member or a member of his staff.

3. Attach a label on the back of the print or slide which identifies the category, course and photographer. DO NOT WRITE DIRECTLY ON THE BACK OF THE PRINT. Each print shall be attached to an 8.5-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper using a loop of masking tape on the back of the print. Slides should be in plastic sleeves for easy access for viewing. Digital images must be accompanied by the same information in an email or document, or on a CD.

4. A caption identifying the category, course and photographer should be typed or printed on the sheet of paper below the mounted print.

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

6. Mail entries in a bend proof package marked PHOTOS DO NOT BEND to Joel Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando, 32819. Entries post-marked after August 1, 2005 will be automatically entered in the 2006 Photo Contest.

The year 2004 produced some memorable moments in sports.

The biggest was the amazing run of the Boston Red Sox, who won eight straight games to win the World Series. And how appropriate that their final victory came on the evening of a lunar eclipse. Or that's what the astronomers told us happened. I believe that in actual fact the moon disappearing was the "Bambino" looking down from on high and with a big wink said "OK, I for give them after 86 years." The Yaz couldn't do it, Fred Lynne couldn't do it, the grounder through Bill Buckner's legs kept them from doing it, but finally the curse is over.

AS IT LIES



Jim Walker

Snuffed out by gutsy pitching, long balls and Irish Luck. The Bosox are World Champs.

How about Vijay Singh? Ten tournaments, and almost \$11 million. That's one dollar for every practice ball he hit in the last twelve months. Then there's the Tiger who slipped from number 1 to number 3.

Year Under Review

Mild distractions like a new 155-foot, \$57 million yacht, a Caribbean wedding which attracted a Who's Who from across the globe, and the Swedish beauty herself. I'm glad to see him squeezing something beside a Golf Pride grip. About time he stopped to smell the roses, the sweet fruit of his labor, to become a complete person and not just a golf machine.

And then there's his Orlando neighbor, Annika Sorenstam. Ten wins worldwide and over \$2.5 million and already a member of the Hall of Fame, I don't know how she keeps herself up mentally for the most mentally challenging game in the world. Maybe, if they have her at the Skins game again next year, they will let her hit from the tees

about 40 yards up from the guys. Having her hit from the same tees as the men is like going bear hunting with a stick.

Philly Mick ended his own curse with a Masters win. Now he is not the best player in the world without a Major victory. And how about Phil's final round in the Grand Slam of Golf: just missing a nine-footer on the 18th for 58? He joins the 59 club. He did this after taking two weeks off before the event and announced after his triumph that he was going to take the next three weeks off. Must be nice! Wouldn't you love to take a few weeks off after successfully overseeding your greens or completing a renovation project? Gee, them Tour pros got it tough.

How about those 2 and 9 (at this point) Dolphins? Who would have thunk it. At least their horrible season saw the departure of Dave Wrongstadt. The team needs a complete overhaul: new offensive line, new receivers, new quarterback, new running back (<ITAL>machts nichts</ITAL> on No. 34), a new front office and let's get Jerry Glanville out of retirement to coach. Miami needs a House of Pain and you gotta love a guy who always left two tickets at will call for Elvis.

I think the Gators made a big mistake

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dumping Ron Zook. I don't see anyone out there to replace him who could do a better job. Since "Spurs" turned them down, perhaps the school will see the error of their ways and rehire him.

The poor Hurricanes almost pulled it off despite losing seven first-round picks from last year and 12 injuries to key personnel on both sides of the ball. The next two

years could spell real trouble to the other top teams if the 'Canes can stay healthy and out of jail.

I guess I now have to say something about Florida State: I don't like Bobby Bowden. I've never liked him and am quite sure I never will!! Sorry Jeb because Tallahassee is such a pretty town. All those live oaks, Spanish moss, and chiggers.

Then there's the rest of the

state teams who also need help: Marlins, Devil Rays, Bucs, Jags. We'll say a little prayer for you, which won't help because you all need BIG TIME HELP. Let's turn up the Heat. Can they make the playoffs with an attack of the Shaq? They just lost a game to the Pistons who have two starters on suspension.

Lets close on a real high note. Ron Artest climbing into the

box seats to pummel a fan who may or may not have thrown a cup of liquid refreshment – a real class act. Six or seven others also received suspensions, including Reggie Miller who received a one-game suspension for wiping up the floor after the melee.

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy 2005, let's hope it's not the same old jive.

While many of you were throwing down overseed to end a rough, hurricane-infested summer and sow hope for a better fall, and while sports teams were setting new all-time lows for sportsmanship in basketball and football, I was quietly becoming eligible for early Social Security at the ripe old age of 62. On the up side I may soon be able to shoot my age in golf, at least I'll keep trying and I hope you will too.

All of us pass many milestones on the road of life, and let's be truthful, some of them can be stumbling blocks and obstacles that make us lose sight of the big picture. But most of our milestones are ceremonial, like attaining a certain age that bestows privileges like a having a driver's

license, the right to vote, consuming a cold beer legally and alas finally drawing Social Security.

Other milestones might include graduating from college, getting married, having and raising kids, surviving a serious accident or health problem and being successful in your work.

Many of these events are life defining, and the wrinkles and gray hairs earned here are more about character and responsibility than achievements earned by the mere passage of time.

Passing milestones can be like running a marathon. Sometimes you hit the wall and other times you slip into that elusive "zone" and things go smoothly. No matter where you are in the race; things can change on a dime and there are no guarantees. Well there is one; I guarantee only you can control how you react to the changes that will invariably come to you along the road of life.

In our sometimes-volatile business, superintendents find themselves holding pink slips on Friday or upon return from vacation or a conference trip and wondering, "What the heck happened?" The course never looked sharper, the crew is happy, the members seemed to be happy, the budget is in line with projections — what is the problem? The problem is that people in charge are only human and they can screw up a good thing for no apparent reason. It could be personal. It could be business. It could be political. It doesn't really matter in the end. You may or may not get justice for some bonehead decision. Life is not always

fair; it just goes on. And so must you.

I ride the roller coaster with all of you. It tickles me to hear of a superintendent celebrating his 10th, 20th, 30th year at a club. It saddens me to hear about folks with the same tenures being let go, and we never seem to know exactly why. But we have lingered long enough at the termination milestone. Too many have passed it, but thankfully most have survived and found out there is life after being fired, so you've got that going for you.

At age 40 you can start your second childhood. When you turn 50, AARP sends you an invitation to join and start getting those automatic "senior citizen" discounts. And at my age 62 you can start drawing early retirement with reduced benefits. One of my friends says he has signed up, and he has to live to 84 before contemporaries who wait till they are eligible for full retirement catch up to him; for my age group that's almost age 66. That's one of those milestones I'm trying to figure out how to handle intelligently.

Meanwhile, I'm happy doing what I do and I hope you are too. If not, then you really should be looking inward to find out what you would like to do and start moving in that direction. It makes no sense to wander aimlessly down the road of life with your shoulder to the grindstone and miss out on all the wondrous sights along the way.

The good and bad milestones on your life's journey will come automatically with or without your help. They say you only go 'round once in life, but if you do it right, once is enough. I'll drink to that.

Late breaking news....

Just when Floridians are putting their lives and property back together from four hurricanes, along comes the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunamis that have killed more than 120,000 people (as of Dec. 31). The total devastation to the homes and infrastructure and overwhelming loss of life are almost incomprehensible.

The disruption and destruction to Floridian's lives and property is no less real, but the magnitude of the Asian Rim disaster must have us counting our blessings in retrospect. People still need help and support here at home, and so do the devastated citizens in the Far East.

The forces of nature have a way of reminding us how fragile mankind can be in the world around us. Against the backdrop of this awful natural catastrophe and its far reaching consequences, the killings and loss of life for political reasons in the mideast and else where only proves how arrogant and shallow some humans can be.

Let us resolve to live better lives in the coming year and give thanks for our blessings every day.

Handling Those Milestones

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS