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meeting with a roundtable discussion. The topic on the agenda was “Managing Ultradwarfs: type, mowing practices, cultural practices, chemical controls, fertility, diseases, insects and no till.” Our March meeting will be at Jim Hill’s Links at Pointe West and our speaker, Mickey Hester, will talk about personal finance. At our February Board meeting we approved the following donations to worthy causes: Citrus Elementary School Audubon Program, \$300; South Fork HS Summer Intern Program, \$3,120; FGCSA Turf Research, \$3,000. Mark your calendars for our annual Blue Pearl Tournament to be held at the Loxahatchee Club June 15.

WEST COAST

Congratulations to our own Jason Kubel from the TPC of Tampa Bay. Jason was one of the 2005 ELGA Chapter winners for Public Facilities presented at the GCSAA Conference in



From the left: GCSAA Director Mark Kuhns, CGCS presents Jason Kubel of the TPC at Tampa Bay with an Environmental Leaders in Golf Award for Public Courses in the Chapter Division. Co-presenters were Barbara Booth of Rain Bird and Joe DiPaola of Syngenta. Photo by Joel Jackson

Atlanta. Jason also recently hosted the Champions Tour’s Outback Steakhouse Pro-Am at his TPC at Tampa Bay course. Check out Jason’s letter in the Superintendent Journal section.

Thanks to Aaron Cook for hosting our January meeting at the Tampa Bay G&CC and for speaker Jim Mendenhall for his educational presentation on snakes. The granddaddy of all FWCGCSA meeting sites is Gerald Marquardt’s

Largo GC annual February meeting. Thanks, Gerald, for hosting this meeting for 20 years. We are hoping for a big turnout at our annual Benevolent Fund tournament in March being held at Kirk Sowers’ Wentworth Golf Club.

FGCSA

Congratulations to the following sons and daughters of FGCSA members who were 2005 Legacy Award winners. They each will receive \$1,500 scholarships from the GCSAA:

- **Ashley Bittner**, University

of Florida, daughter of Bob Bittner, CGCS, Pelican Bay, Everglades GCSA

- **Kevin Klauk**, University of Florida, Son of Glen Klauk (A), Pablo Creek GC, North Florida GCSA

- **Kelly Mongoven**, Florida State University, daughter of Mike Mongoven, CGCS, Shell Point GC, Calusa GCSA

- **Casey Wright**, Baylor University, daughter of Steve Wright, CGCS, Boca West CC, Palm Beach GCSA

So far in 2006, five FGCSA members have completed the requirements to become certified golf course superintendents. Our congratulations go out to:

- **Bryan Cannan**, CGCS, Worthington CC, Everglades GCSA

- **Lynn Davis III**, CGCS, Palatka Municipal GC, North Florida GCSA

- **Kevin Frost**, CGCS, Diplomat/Troon Golf, South Florida GCSA

- **Russ Myers**, CGCS, Card Sound GC, South Florida GCSA

- **Kyle Nygaard**, CGCS, Royal Wood G&CC, Everglades GCSA



It’s not as easy as it looks. Instructor Ed Suarez (standing) puts assistants through their paces as he asks them to build a “working model of a team” using Lego blocks. Photo by Joel Jackson.



The first day of spring at GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence, Kan. Marie Roberts and Joel Jackson got to see snow while attending a Chapter Leaders/Executives Symposium. Photo by Roger Goettsch, CGCS

2006 FGCSA RECEPTION

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No. 16 The Falls Hole
No. 18 Green in Foreground
The Falls C.C.
Photo by Daniel Zelazek



THE FALLS CC

Birds in Paradise

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

The next best thing to being a golf course superintendent and seeing the wildlife on your own golf course is being the editor of this magazine and getting to visit golf courses and see the diverse wildlife inhabiting our state's golf links. The Falls Country Club has provided me (and the members) with two bird sightings not normally afforded most golfers.

A few years back we did a story on a flock of flamingoes that inhabited this southeastern Palm Beach County golf course. I got to see them while playing in one of the Palm Beach Chapter's Future of Golf tournaments held annually to raise money for junior golf programs and for turf research. Superintendent Steve Pearson, CGCS jumped through all sorts of hoops to make the exotic tropical wading birds at home, but after a few

years they moved on.

But this year a new rare visitor has taken up residence in the big lake fed by the namesake waterfalls: a female snow goose. Steve doesn't know if she is a widow on the wing or a divorcee getting away to Palm Beach for the winter. Whatever her marital status, she is ruling the roost in the lake.

Steve comes down to the lake to feed her every day and she honks at him as if to com-

Facts About The Falls



The Falls Country Club

Location: Lake Worth

Ownership: Private, member owned, non-profit corporation

Playing policy: Private. Members and guests only

Number of holes and USGA rating: 18 holes; championship tees 6,800 yards, rating/slope 72.8/136

Designed by: Joe Lee, opened for play 1987.

Management Team: Club President Robert Rachesky; Green Chairman Keith Jampolis; Club Manager Dominic Zeoli; Head Golf Professional Bill Levi; Golf Course Superintendent Steve Pearson

Major Renovations/Ongoing

Projects: In the summer of 2000 we regrassed the greens, laser-leveled and regrassed the tees, and enlarged and reshaped the fairway bunkers. We have

added a lot of new bulkheads around the lakes as time and resources permitted.

Total acreage under maintenance: 135
Greens: Tifdwarf average size 5,340 SF, 2.87 total acres, HOC .130 -.140 inches from November to May. Green Speeds: Nov - May 9.0 –10.0; medium speed in summer - not much play.

Tees: Tifway 419, 2.23 total acres tee tops only, HOC .375 inches all year, no overseeding. We resodded the ladies tee on No. 5 with Celebration bermudagrass in 2004.

Fairways: Tifway 419, 32 total acres, HOC .375 inches, no overseeding.

Roughs: Tifway 419, 64 total acres HOC 2.0 inches most of the year, no overseeding.

Bunkers: 76, 212,000 sq. ft., sand type: FS 100, machine-raked with Toro Sand Pro with cultivators and fan rakes and Cushman with steel plate rakes. Both machines can be set up with brushes only – beautiful job.

Native/Waste areas: Three “no touch” native areas for wildlife cover. 60,000 sq. ft. of crushed concrete screenings for waste areas and about one acre of landscaped beds with perennial plant material.

Waterways: 10 lakes covering 25 acres; maintained with grass carp exclusively, no chemicals added to the water. Lake-bank grass growth controlled by spraying Rodeo every two months.

Irrigation: Surface water from the lakes. PSI pump station with cl-valve controls. Toro Osmac satellites control system with Site Pro software. 688 heads on the course with variable spacing. Watering limited to our CUP issued by SFWMD. We are on a Florida Power Time-of-Use Program so irrigation times are limited to off-peak hours (9 p.m. to noon April to October, 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. November to March).

Water Management/Conservation: Watering times are adjusted daily

based on weather data input and visual observations. We don't water any more than we have to considering the amount of rainfall we get.

Staff: Total including superintendent is 15, not counting part time administrative assistant (20 hr/week) and a landscape foreman and two temporary helpers. Weekly budget per person 40 hours straight time and 3 hours overtime 6 months of the year.

Key personnel: Assistant Superintendent Malvir Gomez; Head Mechanic Leandro Sanchez; Assistant Mechanic Edgar Ardila; Pest Control Technician Steve Popp; Landscape Foreman Ernesto Barajas; Lead Trainer Vernance Paul and Admin Assistant Debbie Jacobs.

Communications: Crew meeting daily; club management meets every two weeks (Nov – March). Calendars and function sheets sent out weekly. Green committee meets twice per year, but I visit with the green chairman whenever he comes out to play. I make it a point to talk to all committee members whenever I see them around the clubhouse or out playing. I interact with a lot of members every day.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

Greens – Aerify 4x year May to September with a variety of tine sizes. This year started hydro-aerifying monthly November to April. Verticut as needed in the summer. Fertilization depends on weather and growing conditions: Average 1 lb of Nitrogen and 1.5 lbs of Potassium per month from granular, fertigation and foliar spraying Topdressing: Heavy topdressing following each of the four summer aerifications (May to September) and light dusting topdressings every 2-3 weeks during the winter season

Tees – Aerify 3x during the summer months with topdressing; verticut heavily in August. Fertility 1 lb N and K per month, granular.

Green Slopes – Mowed and maintained the same as tees except we

don't verticut the slopes. We have player/caddy walkways from tee to fairway maintained the same way. Fairways – Aerify 3x in summer, heavily in August when closed. In past years we have verticut fairways (outside contractor), but did not this past year due to budget constraints and hurricane cleanup. We mow fairways at 3/8-inch all year, striping September to May and multiple directions June to August. Fertility - bulk granular applications May and August (1 lb N & K). First week in October bulk granular (1.5 lbs N and 2.0 lbs K) with lots of slow release material. Liquid fertilizer Dec to Feb/Mar (8-0-8 and 24-0-0 with minors). Depending on turf conditions in Feb/Mar (seldom needed), bulk granular (1 lb N & K) with 50 percent slow release.

Roughs – Aerify 2x in summer, no verticutting. Try to scalp down to 1 inch HOC during August when closed. Same fertility program as fairways but never a Feb/March application.

Pest Control/IPM – Varies annually according to budget and mole cricket pressure. We try to plan on treating tees, green slopes and fairways for grubs and mole crickets for year-round control. A spring/early-summer application is made and then again in August/September after aerification. Roughs are done as needed. Nematodes: Greens are spot treated in the spring on the usual hot spots only. No other nematode treatments made on the course.

Turf management challenges – Non-USGA-spec greens can go through periods of disease pressure in August/September.

Special events and Interesting/unusual facts: We have hosted the Palm Beach GCSA's Future of Golf tournament the past seven years. Our waterfalls are a unique feature. Hurricanes have taken their toll on our tree population: 1999 Irene – 125; 2004 Frances and Jeanne – 434; and 2005 Wilma – 313.

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A young female snow goose is a rare winter visitor to southeast Florida. These birds breed on the tundra and usually winter in the coastal marshes of the Mid-Atlantic or Western Gulf of Mexico. Photo by Joel Jackson.

plain about the water temperature or some noisy neighbors. Her matter of fact demeanor has made her the natural leader of the waterfowl contingent in the lake and a flock of native mottled ducks follows her around all day.

Being in the city, The Falls' wildlife population isn't big on many of the larger critters that find homes on the outlying courses, but the bird inventory is something else. Pearson says, "We

have an osprey that owns the place and is very territorial while fishing our lakes. We occasionally get a visit by a bald eagle also. We have the full complement of wading birds including blue, white, and green herons and various egrets. Then there are the coots, moorhens, anhingas and cormorants. Pelicans and seagulls also like to hang out here.

"Besides the mottled ducks that hang with Mother Goose, we have



One of three "No Touch Areas" on the course. This simple native area, just the length of the tee complex on the 11th hole, provides cover to over 200 wood ducks and several dozen black crested night herons. Photo by Joel Jackson.

around 200 wood ducks that hang out in one of our 'No Touch' areas in the lake adjacent to the 11th tee. We have a wood duck nest box there and we produce several fledglings every year. That particular area also provides cover for a bunch of black crested night herons."

Pearson says The Falls is also home to the normal array of native perching and songbirds commonly found in this part of the state, and they could be seen flying from tree to tree or hopping about in the roughs looking for a meal as we toured the course. But as prolific as the winged birds are at The Falls, there are other birdies that must be attended to.

The Falls Country Club is another Gentleman Joe Lee design and opened for play nineteen years ago. Pearson has been managing the turf here for the past 15 years, and perhaps the past two years have been the toughest to handle. They have been tough because hurricanes Frances, Jeanne in 2004 and Wilma in 2005 destroyed more than 700 trees outright and the lingering effects on the surviving trees have been a constant concern as they struggle to re-establish and flourish again.

Don't misunderstand, the course looked wonderful as we toured the grounds in late February. The telltale sign of staked up trees told the story of the storms' impact and many trees, like others around the state, had been defoliated to some degree and were in the process of coming back. Only those who intimately know the course and



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COVER STORY

what it looked like before the storms could appreciate the blows dealt by the hurricanes. It was evident that Pearson felt the shock and awe of how the course had changed in overall appearance as he pointed out various areas that had lost key trees and limbs that changed the familiar appearance of the course.

The club made a significant investment in restoring many trees lost in the 2004 season only to have many of the large specimen trees uprooted again by Wilma in 2005. But Pearson and staff are back at it and keeping an eye on which trees are making it and which ones may have to be removed. The point is that The Falls is not alone in having to deal with the damage that has changed the appearance of many courses.

Of course behind every dark cloud is a silver lining. Many trees that had perhaps been placed inappropriately and were causing turf shade problems were also victims of the storms and now once-bare-and-thin areas are again growing healthy turf. Clubs have been given a second chance in many locations to put a premium on turf-grass for golf instead of growing forests of trees to fall down in another storm and cost tons of clean-up money that spiraling insurance premiums no longer cover.

As Pearson and the club recover from the storm damage, he is looking forward to a possible major renovation of the greens complexes and course layout in general which may begin in



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