

Fun Facts:

Vehicle: 2005

Ram 1500 quad cab
I stay home to watch: Sports – all of them, especially the Florida Gators.

The book I've been reading: *Rules of Prey* by John Sanford



Favorite meal: Steak – medium rare

Favorite performers: Johnny Mathis

Prized possessions: Opening-game ticket – Marlins vs. Dodgers, April 5, 1993

Personal Heroes: My son's cardiac surgeon and his pediatric cardiologist, Dr. Grace Wolff

Nobody knows that I: Bake my own pies and cookies from scratch
I'm better than anyone else when it comes to: Coaching at third base
I'd give anything to meet: Nobody in particular. Met a lot of people in my career

My fantasy is: Play golf at Cypress Point

The one thing I can't stand: Slow fast-food places

If I could change one thing about myself: Lose weight and keep it off

Most humbling experience: Realizing the importance of being a good parent

The words that best describe me: Organized. Sports nut. Impatient

My most irrational act: Buying a new car and then trading it in after one month. Couldn't stand it.

My dream foursome would be: Arnold Palmer, Bobby Jones, my son and me.

My best fish story: Winning the 2005 FTGA Fishing Tournament with the biggest snook and biggest redfish.

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Steve Pearson, CGCS

Originally From: Michigan. Born in Detroit. Love all Detroit sports teams.

Family: Wife: Wendy (married 33 years). Children: Adrienne and Garrett. Two grandchildren: Morgan (4) and Colette (18 months)

Employment History: 1971 assistant superintendent, Fountains of Palm Beach; 1971-72 assistant superintendent, Johns Island Club; 1972 assistant superintendent Sheoah (now Winter Springs) GC; 1972-77 assistant superintendent, Fountains of Palm Beach, 45 holes (oversaw building of South Course and irrigation system installation; 1977-80 superintendent Mayacoo Lakes; 1980-81 superintendent Boca Lago CC; 1981-89 Superintendent Boca Grove G&TC; 1989-91 superintendent Woodfield CC; 1991 to present superintendent The Falls CC.

Professional Affiliations: 25 year member of the GCSAA, certified since 1990. Florida Turfgrass Association – 35-year member. Served on numerous committees – Scholarship and Research the longest – editor of the Florida Turf Digest for seven years. 2004 Wreath of Grass recipient. Palm Beach GCSA – member since inception in 1978. All board positions, president 1986-87. Currently serving as vice president and will become president for second time in 2006-07. Florida GCSA member since inception in 1980, research committee, Presidents Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1999.

How did you get into the business? Played golf on high school and junior college teams. Majoring in architecture but higher math did me in. Worked one summer at the Fountains and decided to transfer to UF in Turf Management. Worked with Dr. G.C. Horn. Came back to the Fountains after college and worked for Felix Paguaga at the Fountains.

Mentors: G.C. Horn really got me enthusiastic about turf management on the technical and educational side. Felix Paguaga – my mentor in the beginning. I learned a lot about turf but more importantly I learned how to deal with members. I have also learned a lot from my peers in the industry. The friendships that I have developed over the years have been phenomenal. Everyone has helped me over the years. You can learn so much just by networking with other superintendents.

Goals/Accomplishments: I'm very proud to be recognized for my contributions to the industry with the Wreath of Grass and Presidents Awards. I'm also proud of our work with the Florida Turfgrass Association. It was difficult but rewarding to work on the Florida Turf Digest magazine and watch it grow over the years. One goal I'd like to see would be to oversee the eventual renovation of the greens to USGA specs and irrigation system upgrades and new aesthetics for the course.



Steve Pearson poses with a replacement specimen oak tree from the 2004 storms that got hammered in 2005. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Philosophy of work/advice: Not uncommon to others in the industry, I try to do the very best for my club with the resources provided. I think I am very efficient and organized. I believe in getting the most “bang for the buck.” My advice to prospective superintendents: Work hard. Be studious and sincere in your approach to being a superintendent. Be willing to be patient and learn how to be a better people manager. There is a lot more to being a superintendent than growing turfgrass. Listen, read and become involved with your superintendent organizations.

Personal memorable moments: Outside of golf – Coaching my daughter, Adrienne, in her younger days in slow-pitch softball and eventually being part of teams winning two national championships and seven state championships and lots of tournaments. Golf related – playing in Father/Son tournaments with my son Garrett and watching sporting events with him. He's a sports nut just like I am. Playing Pebble Beach and hitting my tee shot in almost total darkness on the par 3, 17th hole to 18 inches. What a birdie! They had to kick us off the 18th hole that day.

Hobbies and interests: My wife is also a baseball nut. We really enjoyed watching all the Marlins' divisional, National League championship and Worlds Series games in 2003 and 2007 in person. In general: Sports! Marlins baseball, golf, any UF Gators sports. Fishing. Listening to audio books and watching my grandchildren grow up.



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Here's an idea for a colorful, attractive alternative to plain old bridge railings that often serve as messy bird roosts. Photo by Joel Jackson.

ing greens reconstruction or regrassing. Do a test site and make comparisons first hand before jumping into something you may regret later. Pearson said, "The USGA profile allows the greens to breathe. It isn't unusual for our old greens to run into problems late in the summer during periods of heavy rain-

next year."

Pearson had already upgraded his irrigation pump station and control system in 2000. Most of the work was done in-house to install the Toro Site Pro system. Interestingly enough his old cla-valve system, the piping and heads have not had to be replaced. Pearson says

with the new computer controls he can stagger watering times and volumes so effectively he hasn't seen the need yet for a VFD pump.

Pearson said, "We have been lucky that the original system was installed properly. We have had maybe 1-2 leaks a year at most, and we seldom have to replace a head." Pearson thinks that the 4,000-gallon-per-minute pump that supplies the trademark waterfall feature on the 16th hole is part of the reason. He said, "All of the lakes are interconnected and the irrigation pump is on a small cove on the waterfall lake. I think the constant circulation prevents stagnation and algae formation which keeps junk from building up in the head and causing problems." He also cites the critical positioning and construction of the wet well for the pump intake that does not suck up any sediment to erode the pipes and heads.

And the aquatic weed control program in his lakes is very simple

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The 535-yard, par-5, 8th hole wraps around a lakeside bunker. Photo by Daniel Zelazek

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There are five bird species in this group on the 17th hole. Appearing in alphabetical order: Brown pelicans, cormorants, sea gull, snowy egret and white ibis. Photo by Joel Jackson.

– grass carp. He said, “We don’t put anything into our lakes for weed control except the fish. We spray the lake banks with Rodeo every couple of months to control the grass growth on the lake banks.” It works. The only thing you see in the lakes besides the bottom along the edges is the broad back of the carp as they forage in shallow water.

The irrigation water for The Falls

is strictly surface water from rainfall and from an adjacent canal that Pearson can access if his lake levels fall too low. Pearson is on a Florida Power Non-Peak Hours plan so he irrigates during periods when the rates are lower.

If the course renovation project takes place next year, Pearson and the club are considering replacing the Tifdwarf with a new variety and the

jury is still out on which one they may choose, but TifEagle is among the top candidates. As far as the remainder of the turf on the course, Pearson has been very pleased with the Tifway 419 and has harvested his own sprigs from the driving range to re-grass areas on the course in the past. The only variation he may consider is using Celebration bermudagrass on some shady tees. Pearson added, “We had a shade problem on the forward tee on hole #5 and we tried Celebration there and are liking what we see. Once we see how the new layout starts shaping up we may install more on any tees that look they will have shade issues.”

Pearson, like so many other superintendents I have interviewed recently, is taking a holistic approach to turf management. They are keeping a wary eye on the weather especially in the late summer and early fall when the heat and humidity and cloudy days can affect growing conditions. They are backing off fixed schedules for cultural practices and instead operate in a more prescription-management mode to avoid unnecessarily stressing the turf-grass. Pearson is lucky to be able to shut down the course in August, one of the most stressful periods in South Florida, to take advantage of very low play to get work done on the course to get ready for the fall season.

All work and no play would make Steve a dull fellow if I didn’t already know him from our joint work on the FTGA’s Florida Turf Digest magazine when Steve was the editor and his years of service on committee and boards for the Palm Beach GCSA, the Florida GCSA and the FTGA. He has been Mr. Volunteer for decades and even now he is on his second time around the Palm Beach GCSA board. He will reprise his role as president again next year. When asked why he was doing a second stint, he replied, “We have a great crop of younger folks coming along, but they needed a little more experience and seasoning before they felt ready to move into the officer rotation. The chapter needed someone to fill in the gap and I agreed.” He added with a grin, “I am the vice president this year and president

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Short but dangerous. The 323-yard 15th hole invites a second shot over water to a well-bunkered green. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

next year. My seniority meant I didn't have to spend two years as secretary and treasurer."

Pearson is also an avid sportsman and sports fan. He is pretty fair golfer having played on high school and

junior college teams. He is also a trophy-winning fisherman taking Biggest Snook and Redfish prizes at the 2005 FTGA Fishing Tournament in Bonita Springs. Before becoming Grandpa Pearson, he helped coach his daughter's slow-pitch team to seven state titles and two national championships.

He and his wife Wendy are baseball nuts and enjoy going to Florida Marlins games. They were in hog heaven in 2003 and 2007 when the Marlins were in the World Championships. Pearson also bleeds University of Florida orange and blue as a 1971 graduate with his BS in agriculture specializing in turf management.

Good superintendents take pride and virtual ownership of their golf courses, and Pearson is no exception. The hard work and long hours of dealing with storm damage have paid off and while some of the old familiar views have changed, the joyful sights and sounds of birds and birdies are being seen and heard in paradise once again.



New landscape plantings brightened up the old storm damaged plantings around the course. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Congratulations to **Steve Pearson**
and his club for being selected by
the **Palm Beach GCSA** as the
**Spring 2006 Florida
Green Cover Story.**

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ENVIRONMENTAL-ISSUES
GROUP PRESENTATION

Learning To Use Power Point

By Mike Mongoven, CGCS

Recently I answered the phone and it was a Mr. Smith calling. He identified himself as the chairman of the local residents' Environmental Issues Group. With a touch of skepticism I wondered why Mr. Smith was calling me. He said he wanted me to be the speaker for their February meeting. I agreed and realized that this was an opportunity to reach out to the community, but I was also a bit nervous.

This scenario took place at my Shell Point Golf Club. The invitation was initiated by the group after they read the press release from Audubon International recognizing Shell Point for achieving certification in Environmental Planning and Water Conservation. The invitation was for a 30-40 minute presentation with questions to follow. I was excited for the opportunity, but at the same time anxious about how and what I was going to do.

My first course of action was to ask for help and I did that liberally. The first e-mail I sent was to Joel Jackson, director of communications for the Florida Golf Course Superintendents. He was both helpful and encouraging. He also gave me several other potential contacts including Mark Johnson, GCSAA; Shelly Foy, USGA; and Joellen Zeh, Audubon International. Joel also sent me a packet



Microsoft PowerPoint turned out to be an excellent tool for creating a presentation about water conservation and other environmental issues on golf course. PowerPoint slide by Mike Mongoven.

of information called the Environmental and Economic Facts about Florida Golf. I also spoke with Dick Bessire and John Houchens of Waste2Water.

When I spoke with Mark Johnson of GCSAA he was very helpful. He was the first person who suggested the potential of using a Power Point presentation. Mark also spoke to me about using the Environmental Institute for Golf link on the GCSAA Web site and pointed me in a direction regarding the presentation. My initial thoughts were to have some type of field trip for the group to the golf maintenance facility. I had never done a Power Point presentation, but had seen many of them. It sounded like a good idea because I could show slides of our recycled water system and not worry about transporting a large group of people.

Shelly Foy and Joellen Zeh were both encouraging. Joellen e-mailed me a prepared Power Point presentation that is used by Audubon International to promote the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. She also gave me some ideas about the structure of the presentation.

I decided to highlight the steps we take on the golf course and at the main-

tenance facility to conserve water and also to review IPM and our Waste2Water system. Setting up the presentation was really very simple. I had help from Dan Dula, one of the Shell Point computer department staff members. He spent about 75 minutes showing me how to set up the program, run the program and even gave me some presentation ideas. It really was a very simple process to add slides and to put pictures on slides.

I gave the oral presentation, but it truly was a cooperative group effort. I'd be remiss if I didn't give credit and thanks to our current golf course superintendent, Mark Jacobs, and former superintendent, Terry Stroyer, now at the City of Ft. Myers G.C., for their hands-on efforts in our programs. Along with Jim Carpenter, our golf professional, they all took pictures of scouting, hand watering, water recycle system and others used for the presentation. I moved the pictures to the slides and then added up to 3 bullet points that would prompt me to discuss related ideas and concepts as the pictures appeared on the screen.

The presentation ended up containing 27 slides. I started and ended with a "Beauty Shot" of the course. Developing the presentation took less