

fennel weeds growing in the junkpile out behind some shops.”

Maybe you could call it good turf housekeeping, but Kubel says paying attention to the turf daily also pays off environmentally.

“By following consistent monitoring, mapping and scouting practices we have been able to save the club money and minimize inputs to the golf course. One thing we do is keep the practice area as our control area. We don’t do preventive applications on that area. It becomes our barometer to tell us when pests are emerging and signals us to take a harder look at our traditional hot spots for pest infestation. Once we see pests on the range, then we go out and spot-treat to make sure the turf is protected. It serves as our lightning rod.”

Agronomically, the TPC course is situated in low-lying lake and creek basins, so moisture control on the course is paramount to keep the



Superintendent Jason Kubel and General Manager Brady Boyd work as team at the TPC at Tampa Bay Golf Club. Photo by Joel Jackson.



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Aquatic plantings and tall 4-5 inch St. Augustine roughs buffer the lake on the par-3, 17th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

Learning the land and how it responds is one of the tools a superintendent uses to maximize the budget and minimize turf damage. That's why he stresses good record keeping and mapping of problem areas.

turf healthy and playing conditions manageable. Hence weather is monitored closely every day, and watering cycles are based on ET demand and data from moisture meter readings. Deep and infrequent irrigation is the rule.

Two continuing projects occupy any available spare time. One is reconstruction of the bunkers in three-year phases. The greens were done from 2003 to 2006 and the fairway bunker complexes are next. Kubel says,

“It has been a long process but it has paid off. In the past after a severe thunderstorm it might take two weeks to repair all the bunker washouts. Now it might take two days. We have altered the subgrade slope of the bunkers, installed curtain drains at the top of the slope and improved interior drainage. The sand just doesn't move or get contaminated like it used to.”

The other long-range project is wetland restoration, which involves the removal of invasive plant material that has overtaken the wetlands. With the help of the Lake Masters Company, a program of chemical and mechanical removal has made great progress in opening up the understory in the wetlands so native cypress and ferns can proliferate. Wildlife habitat improvement and better air circulation are benefits along with the improved aesthetics.

Kubel believes success of long-range projects like these along with efficient and practical turf management programs benefit from having a superintendent on board with some tenure. Learning the land and how it responds is one of the tools a superintendent uses to maximize the budget and minimize turf damage. That's why he stresses good record

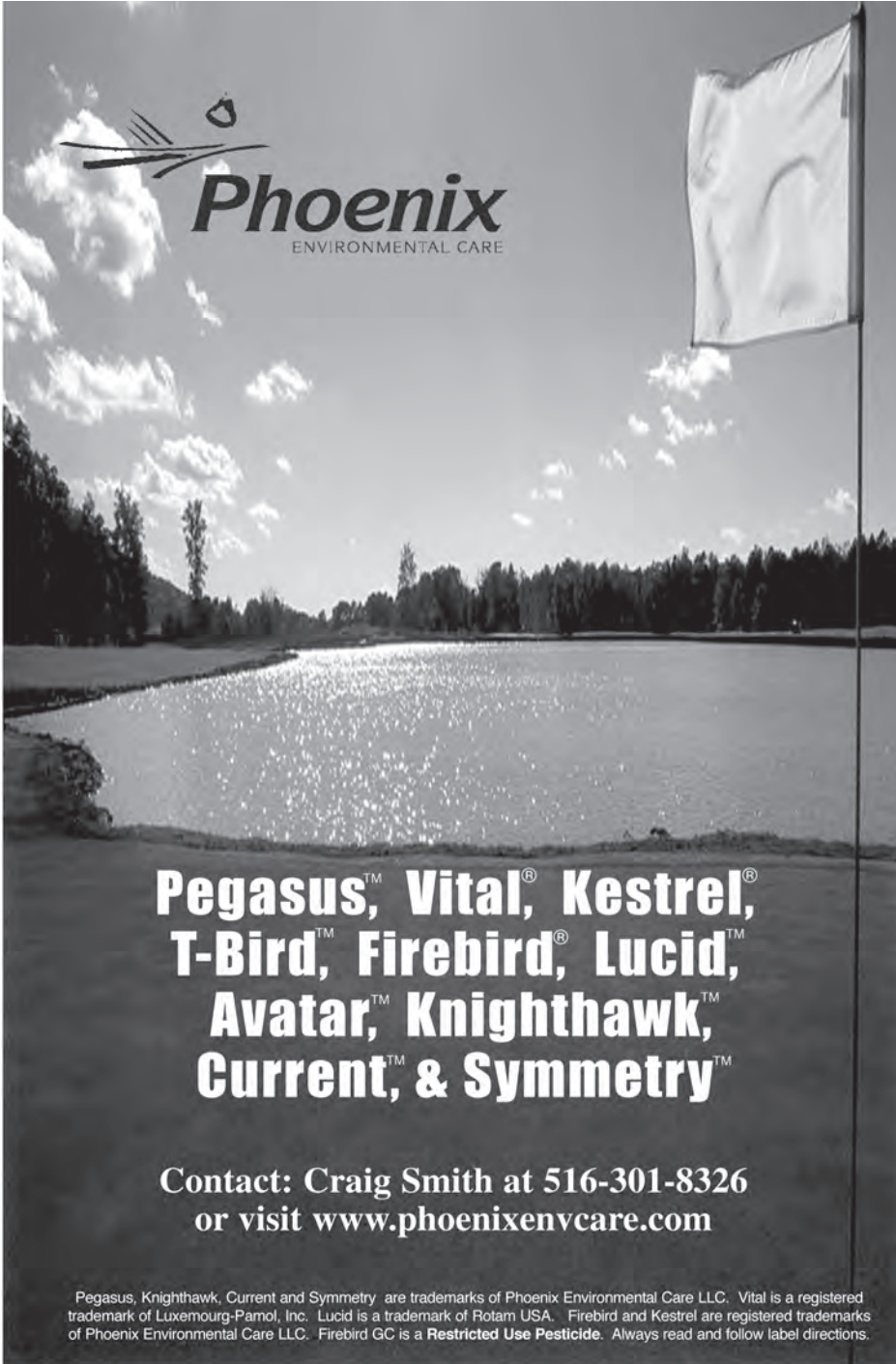

keeping and mapping of problem areas.

On the 152 acres of maintained turf on the course, Kubel treats only about 50 acres per year with a product like Curfew when warranted for nematode, mole cricket and grub control. He said they sometimes have been able to get three years' control in some areas, which helps reduce the total amount used on the course overall.

"Today we have to be very aware and sensitive to our role in the environment. We are under the proverbial microscope and we can all use a little common sense to improve our position in the public eye. For instance, ants sometimes become a problem on the putting surfaces. Rather than treat the whole green, we just make a perimeter pass around the green with some Top Choice and we have solved the problem while using less product which is good for the budget's bottom line and good for the environment."

But Kubel, like many other turf professionals, gets frustrated sometimes with the hypocrisy of regulatory concerns over golf in relation to environmental issues. He said, "Recently I had to fight tooth and nail to keep from having our consumptive use permit reduced from 101 acres to 60 acres. They said our roughs weren't revenue producing acres and we were wasting water. Meanwhile there are eight houses on my street and four of them are watering their yards in the rain."

But Kubel has been making TPC



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Morning view of the 456-yard, par-4, 18th hole from behind the green. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



Audubon Scrapbook informs members and guests of environmental stewardship. Photo by Joel Jackson.

good for the environment ever since he arrived four and a half years ago. The course has been certified in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program since 1997 and it was re-certified on Kubel's watch. Besides the 2005 and 2006 ELGA awards, Kubel has made it a point to engage residents and local school kids in the efforts taking place on the course.

He writes newsletter articles on practical lawn care and irrigation tips for the residents. The kids have constructed many of the bird nesting boxes seen on the course. Golfers are kept aware of the course wildlife and environmental activities through newsletter articles and the Audubon Scrapbook in the lobby of the clubhouse – thanks to the scrapbooking talents of his administrative assistant Kathy Amick.

Besides Amick, Kubel has high

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SUPERINTENDENT FACTS



Kubel briefs PGA Tour office on Outback tournament-prep progress. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Jason Kubel

Membership: Class A, GCSAA

From: Daytona Beach, FL

Family: Wife Marcy; two daughters Ashley (8) and Brooke (6) and son Austin (2)

Education: A.S. Golf Course Operations, Lake City Community College 1994

Employment: 2002-Present, GCS TPC Tampa Bay; 2002 GCS, Cypress Head, Port Orange; 2000-01 GCS, The King & The Bear, St. Augustine; 1998-2000 GCS Baytree National GC, Melbourne; 1995-1998, AS, Isleworth G&CC, Windermere; 1994-95, Second AS LPGA International, Daytona Beach; 1993, Intern Doral Resort, Miami; 1992, Intern, Cypress Head GC, Port Orange; 1988-91 Foreman, Oceanside G&CC, Ormond Beach.

Professional Affiliations & Awards: Class A member of the GCSAA since 1991; Florida West Coast GCSA – board member past two years. Winner of GCSAA/Golf Digest ELGA Chaper Award for Public Courses in 2005 and 2006.

Memorable moments: Getting to know and work with the legendary Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus during the construction and grow-in of The King and The Bear course.

Hobbies: Offshore fishing, cooking, tennis, family vacations.

praise for his entire staff. He said, "Our team demonstrates commitment and loyalty on a daily basis as they go about their assignments. I can't thank them enough for the services they provide."

Teamwork is obviously a key part of the TPC culture as General Manager Brady Boyd had his own praise for Kubel's leadership and management style. Boyd said, "We're very proud of Jason and the job he's done the past four and a half years. Much of what he's accomplished is "underground" and isn't always immediately obvious, but we see the end result and overall improvements to the course. His leadership style has his department more involved and engaged in club and network activities and he has reduced the turnover rate in maintenance tremendously. I often say he's the best hire I ever made."

Once upon a time Kubel had aspirations to be an architect. In seeking some part time work, a friend mentioned a possible "cart boy" job at a nearby golf club that he thought would offer great tips and a work schedule that would fit his school schedule. When he applied the only position open was in golf course maintenance. He got the job and never quit. He ended up with his AS degree from Lake City.

Currently in his mid-30s, Kubel says one of his goals is to retire at age 50. When asked what he would do if he retired from golf he said, "Well, I love to cook!" That makes sense coming from a guy who wrote that he stays home to watch the Food Channel cooking shows. Look out Emeril!

The life and career path of a superintendent often means changing jobs and locations as you move up the ladder from assistant to head superintendent. Kubel says his biggest supporter has been his wife, Marcy. He said, "It takes a special person to commit to a relationship with someone in this industry. I wouldn't have made it this far without her."

Another important relationship is volunteering time to his local superintendent chapter. Kubel is currently serving on the Florida West



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Fun Facts

Jason's Stats

Vehicle: 2000 Dodge Ram, 4x4

Last good movie I saw: Outlaw Josie Wales, or any 007 movie

I stay home to watch: Cooking shows

The book I've been reading: Current events & research in trade magazines

Favorite meal: Ahi tuna on beansprouts with wasabi sauce and onion rings

Favorite performers: Clint Eastwood, AC/DC, Kenny Chesney, Jimmy Buffet, Neil Young, Brooke

Burns, Rolling Stones, and Aerosmith

Prized possessions: My children and the WWII memorial on our wall showing my grandfather receiving the Bronze Star Medal from General George Patton.

Personal Heroes: My wife Marcy. How she tolerates me I'll never know. She's the best

Nobody knows that I: Passed up an opportunity to caddy for Jack Nicklaus

The one thing I can't stand: Disrespect

If I could do it over: I'd do it again

I'd give anything to meet: Any of our U.S. Presidents

If I could change one thing about myself: Learn to be more patient
My most irrational act: Losing my patience

Most humbling experience: The births of all of my children

The words that best describe me: Outgoing and straightforward

My best fish story: You should have seen the one that got away

My most lucky golf shot: All my shots are lucky

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Close up of the approach to the Par 5, 12th hole from the layup position. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

... one of the lessons learned from those mentors was, 'Don't let the new technologies get in the way of the basics. Keep it simple and practical.'

Coast GCSA's board. His responsibility is meeting planning and education. He often calls on former meeting chairman Duane VanEtten for backup when he needs a helping hand. Kubel admits that his volunteer duties are the last thing on his daily agenda. But Kubel also recognizes the value of the time spent on chapter business.

"Last year," he said, "I was in charge of the newsletter. It wasn't easy for me. I don't consider writing one of my best skills. But by having this responsibility it forced me to become better and now I am writing articles for our club newsletter, and case studies and applications for the GCSAA ELGA Awards and our ACSP certification requirements. It has been rewarding personally and professionally to be involved."

If Kubel has any regrets so far in his career it was the time he declined the

opportunity to caddy for Jack Nicklaus when he was paired with Arnold Palmer at the Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf at the World Golf Village. He followed the group but let his boss at the time, Steve LaFrance, have the honor. During the round, Palmer was lining up a putt and asked Kubel, outside the ropes which way the putt broke. Kubel asked, "Is it legal for me to tell?"

Kubel says if you're not having fun doing what you do then it's time for a change. He credits all of the superintendents he's worked for with contributing to his success. He said, "They each have played the role of a mentor and more importantly as a friend." He added that one of the lessons learned from those mentors was, "Don't let the new technologies get in the way of the basics. Keep it simple and practical."