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**BLUE PEARL**

Special thanks to the Quail Valley Golf Club  
for hosting the 2012 Blue Pearl Tournament

dewdrops on a leaf blade and wildlife on the course. You can check out Bill's blog at: <http://ccnmaintenance.blogspot.com>.

Bill's communication skills and leadership qualities have earned the trust and confidence of the membership. He is called upon to also oversee the maintenance operations at the clubhouse, which leads us back to the story's theme. The whole air-conditioning system in the clubhouse is being overhauled and the club is considering a rooftop solar panel system to help power the clubhouse and generate power back to the local grid.

Davidson said he really appreciates the confidence the club has in his abilities. He added, "Another thing I like is that the club

has taken a practical and proactive stance on running the club. They haven't over-reacted to the current trends in the flat golf market and economic stresses. They are working to re-purpose the club in a very practical way to include the amenities needed to attract new members as the face of golf and club membership needs and expectations change with the generations.

"I love my job. I like the certain amount of autonomy that comes with my responsibilities and the new challenges given me with the clubhouse maintenance duties. I think of myself as being pretty detail-oriented and analytical. I like the wide-ranging problem-solving aspect of the superintendent's role."

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*View from the clubhouse overlooking the first hole. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

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## COUNTRY CLUB OF NAPLES

**Location:** Naples  
**No. of Holes:** 18;  
**Yardage:** 6,772;  
**Par:** 72; **Slope & Rating:** 73.7 / 136  
**Ownership:** Member owned since 1966  
**Playing Policy:** Private

**Designed by:** Original design by Bill Diddle in 1963. Redesigned by Gordon Lewis in 2009. Opened in 1964 as the first full-service private club in Naples.  
**Management Team:** Club President Marshall Dean; Green Chairman Charlie Murphy; Head Golf Professional Tony Franklin, head pro at CCN for 14 years; Controller Libby Hoyer-Booth (20 years); Membership Director (new position at the club) Holly Stevens (1 year); Chef Todd Warosh (22 years); Superintendent Bill Davidson (since 2008). Bill also has clubhouse building maintenance management responsibilities.  
**Projects:** Complete golf course reconstruction in 2009. This was the first major improvement to the course since 1964. The only items left in place were the greens' wells and 70 percent of the irrigation system.  
**Total property acres:** 185. Acreage under maintenance: 85  
**Greens:** Turf Type: Miniverde. Average size: 3,500 square feet. Acres: 1.8  
**HOC:** .120 year-round.  
**Overseeding:** none. Green speed goals: 10.5 – 11.5.



*The Country Club of Naples Maintenance Staff. Photo by Joel Jackson*

**Tees:** Turf Type: Celebration bermudagrass. Acres: 1.8. HOC: .350 in season, .500 in summer.

**Overseeding:** Tees 1 through 18 none. Practice Range Tee overseeded due to small size. 400 lb/acre ryegrass blend.

**Fairways:** Turf Type: Celebration. Total acres: 25. HOC: .500. Overseeding: None

**Roughs:** Turf Type: Celebration. Total acres: 35. HOC: 1.25" in season. .75" in summer.

**Bunkers:** Number of bunkers 65. Sand type: 326 Overseeding: None; Machine raked: Toro Sand Pro with no tines on rakes and brooms to smooth surface. Landscaped and naturalized areas/beds: Around 15 acres total.

**Waterways/Lakes/Ponds:** Total number: 5. Acres: 5.3. Lake maintenance contracted out.

**Irrigation:** Direct feed from effluent plant. No pump station. We do have two emergency wells.

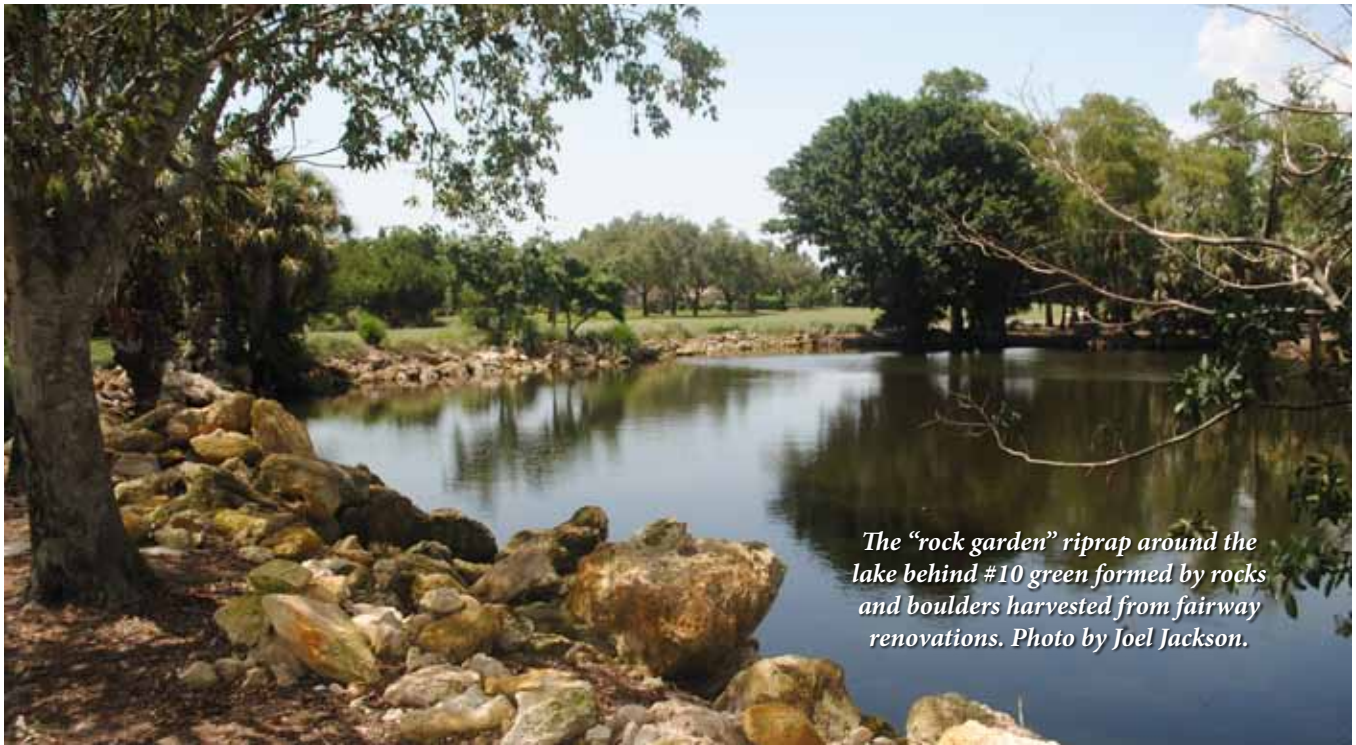
1,600 heads, 65-foot spacing. Osmac control system. Around 750 heads on 85-foot spacing. We do have fertigation capability, but it is rarely used.  
**Watering restrictions:** No restriction as long as pumping only reclaimed water. Water Management/Conservation practices: We use a lot of adjuvants to help manage our soil moisture levels.

The course design is an "old-school ground-game" approach so that dictates fast, firm and dry conditions to help ball roll.

**Staff:** Total including superintendent: 19. Schedule: 40 hours straight time.

**Key Staff:** Assistant(s) 1st Assistant Erick Landis; 2nd Assistant Trevor Floyd; Head Equipment Technician Frank Novotny; Assistant Equipment Technician John Morgan; Pest Control Technician Ken McAlister.

**Meetings/ Communications:** Monthly safety crew meetings. Regular daily crew assignments are displayed digitally on a large-screen monitor in the break room. Any daily changes or special instructions are handwritten and posted on a white board. The club currently has no general manager, so the club committee system is very active managing the club's operations and I attend many of these meetings on a monthly basis.



*The “rock garden” riprap around the lake behind #10 green formed by rocks and boulders harvested from fairway renovations. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

Davidson added, “I was fortunate to work with some quality people coming up in the business like Wayne Stewart, Steve Durand, Matt Taylor, Frank Kynkor and Tim Hiers. From them I learned you have to be persistent, dedicated and diplomatic to really make it in this business. Now I strive to mentor my assistants and share my experiences with them.”

There is a growing focus on programs for assistant superintendent members of the GCSAA and state and local chapters. There’s no question that today’s golf market has made career progression a rockier road.

Davidson said, “When I hire an assistant, I’m looking for an individual with personality, leadership and communication skills and a good work ethic. Certainly a turf management education background

is worthwhile, but I can teach them the turf management skills they need at CCN. Each course has its own special needs, but it’s all about attitude and how they work with people that makes them successful. Once they learn our turf programs, I want to focus on their business and communications skills, which has been a sorely neglected side of the job for many years.”

Davidson continued, “I’d also like to see assistants do more networking with peers. I learned the value of that network by watching guys like Matt and Tim over the years. I know I can call on any number of folks in our industry for help when I have a problem whether it’s turf-related or help with association business.”

Davidson went on discuss the current

trends in associations and club operations in general. “We are in the midst of a generational shift from the “man cave,” work-centric model for superintendents and associations. Today, where dad goes the family goes. We are mobile family units and tend to be kid-centric in our spare time. We work hard all day and all week, but when the whistle blows we want to spend time with the family. I love coaching my son’s lacrosse team. I even play the game myself. I also love fishing with my son and one of the greatest joys I’ve had is teaching him to fish like my dad taught me.

And so it is, as we move from generation to generation, enjoy the journey, because in life and golf course maintenance everything old is new again.

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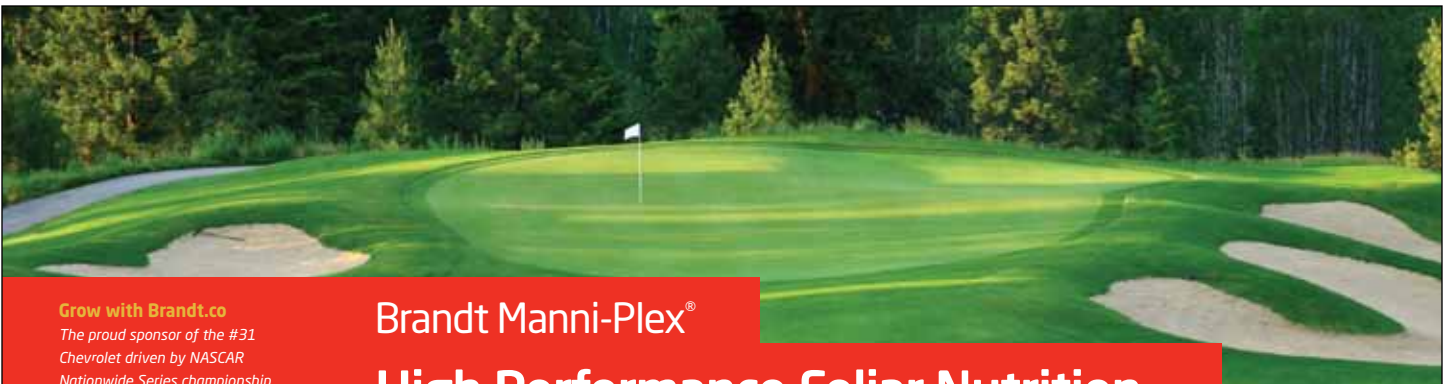
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*Rocks and boulders are harvested from the back nine fairways during renovation and construction projects.*



*Peyton and Trace Davidson check out a Lane Edwards Design bird box on Dad's course.*



# Country Club of Naples

Photos by Joel Jackson

*Aerial photo view on #7 looking north. The tall buildings in the distance border the Gulf of Mexico.*



*These Canna lilies add color to the naturalized areas on the course.*



*The dirt flies when fairway verticutting during the "100 Day War," otherwise known as summer renovation at CCN.*



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# The Power of Laugh Therapy:

## Do you have some to share?

By Mike Mongoven, CGCS  
Former Director of Golf, Shell Point Golf Club



Mike Mongoven, CGCS

**Getting fired is no laughing matter. Have you ever been fired? Don't think it will happen to you? Well, neither did I.**

Who are those people who get fired? At least a few of them look like me. I used to think that I was really in a select group and I felt good about that. Over 28 years in the golf business and only three jobs. I had a successful family with a wife and three children. I had been

the president of my local chapter and a leader in my church. All in all, I was doing pretty well; at least it felt that way at the time.

My career progression was steady. I started as an assistant golf course superintendent and was promoted when my boss moved on. After four years I went to work for the City of Fort Myers. There I was responsible for the maintenance of two courses. On my first day of work, I moved a sign off the floor in my office and noticed that it was covering a hole in the floor.

The Quonset hut building was not a state-of-the-art maintenance building. It was part of an actual barn. During my nine-and-a-half years with the city, much was accomplished. We rebuilt both courses. One of the rebuilds was complete with irrigation and tree removal. The Quonset hut was also replaced with a facility that actually had a proper area for equipment washing and garage doors.

I left a good job to take a better one. My new role would be to manage the entire golf operation for a developer and it would begin from the ground up. Five holes were under way when I started and that was it. No maintenance building was planned and I was literally the first person to know that we would actually need one. I was given the ability to make a mark on not only

the golf course and golf maintenance, and also the golf operations: from the name of the course to how it would operate.

Twelve years later we were doing pretty well with 48,000 rounds per year, 417 members and income above expenses by \$350,000. We experienced some hiccups along the way, but who doesn't? There had been a steady increase in play, memberships and revenue over the last three years. Much had changed, but the team I had assembled was responding to a lot of issues with all sorts of innovative ideas.

I have been successful professionally and I felt good about that. Was I a perfect employee? Well no, and those who know me realize that I can be independent and sometimes bull-headed.

I could be unconventional in my approach. Even with my not-so-positive attributes, I felt that I was in select company. Certainly, I was not a slacker who deserved to be fired.

That all changed on April 5, 2012. On that day at 2:05 p.m. I became one of the fired.

What happened?

Well, I would really like to know myself. It was a shock five months ago and honestly it remains that way today. What really happened is for others to say. I used to say that I didn't fire people, they fired themselves.

### Did I do that to myself?

Have you been where I am? Certainly, I am neither the first nor the last. I had sympathy for those who lost their jobs because of the economy. Now I really have "sympathy" for them.

One of the things you need to do when you get fired is move forward. It really seems pretty simple, but stuff does seem to get in the way. After the shock wears off just around the corner are anger, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment, and anger.

I had landed a new job whether I wanted it or not – job hunting. And it did not pay cash or benefits. I wish I had some magic formula to solve the problem that I could pass along to you. The fact is I remain actively searching for my next professional opportunity. Here are some tips I that have been helpful for me.



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