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The traditional Poa Luau on the Lawn concludes the 2013 Everglades Poa Annuu Classic. At the Luau it was announced that Seth Strickland from the Miami Shores GC shot a 69 to capture the Poa Annuu Trophy and win a spot on the FGCSA Golf Team competing in the GCSAA Championship in Orlando in February 2014. For many more photos of the Poa Weekend see the Everglades chapter link on www.floridagcsa.com. Photo by Joel Jackson.



From left: The team of Matt Tacilauscus, Mark Reid, Ashley Byham and Blair Kirby won the 33rd Annual Palm Beach Future of Golf Tournament at the Falls CC in Lake Worth on June 1. Perennial host, superintendent Steve Pearson, CGCS says that the total monies raised for junior golf, local charities and turf research comes to approximately \$825,000. Photo by Joel Jackson



Meanwhile, Brian MacCurrach, right, with Bayer Environmental conducted his second 2013 Bayer Power Pak Auction of the year at the Future of Golf event, and Randy Gaudet from the Polo Club of Boca Raton won the bidding at \$6,100 which goes back to the PBGCSA and adds to the funds raised by the event. Photo by Joel Jackson



From left: Three of the four finalists at the 2013 Jack Harrell, Sr. Memorial – Ridge Invitational Tournament.: Adam Ellison, Gary Newcomb and Mike Giddens had a shot at a \$50,000 hole-in-one shot. The fourth, Tim Keany, left right after he took his shot and missed. The Grasslands CC in Lakeland hosted the event this year. Photo by Joel Jackson.

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THE BILTMORE HOTEL AND GOLF COURSE: *A Time Travel Adventure*

The calendar on my iPhone said it was March 28, 2013 as I pulled out of the UF/IFAS Research and Education Center in Ft. Lauderdale and headed south toward Miami. I was en route to the Biltmore Golf Course to visit with superintendent Bryan Singleton and research this cover story.

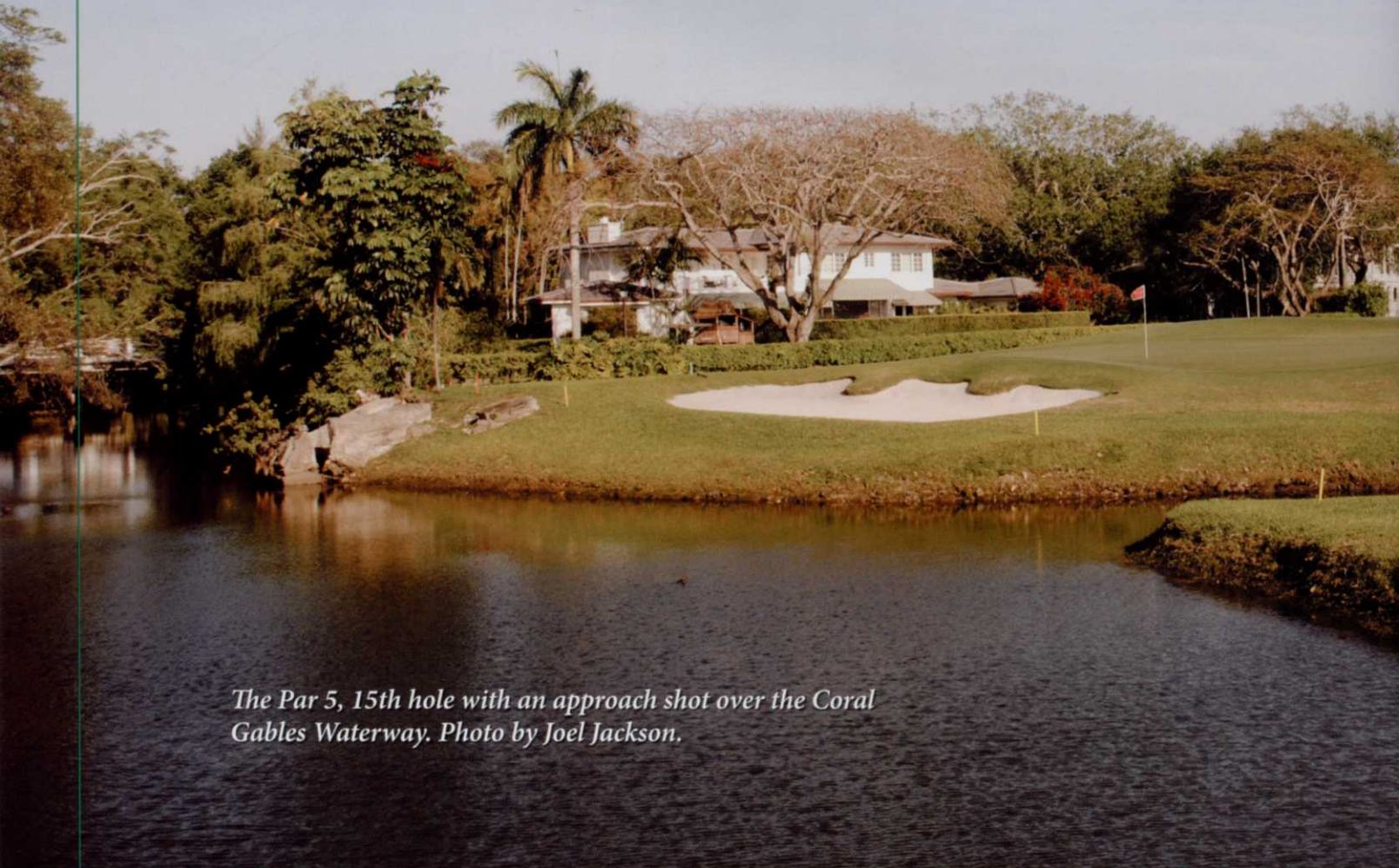
Once on the property, I was transported in time, aided by the architecture of the hotel and golf course. The portraits and photographs of presidents, sports legends, iconic entertainers and other historical figures on the walls made it even easier to turn back the pages of history.

I was familiar with course in general because I had played it a couple of times when it was a municipal golf course while I was in the U.S. Coast Guard and stationed in Miami in 1965 to 1967. The hotel was closed at the time and was acting as a military hospital. But I'm getting ahead of the amazing story of this historic property.

None other than the legendary Donald Ross designed the golf course in 1925. It was originally a 36-hole layout that wrapped around and extended southward from the hotel. Six years later, in 1931, the Miami-Biltmore Open – the richest

professional golf tournament in golf at the time – attracted legends Walter Hagen, Paul Runyan, Ralph Guldahl, Bill Mehlhorn, U. S. Open Champion Billy Burke and Gene Sarazen, who would capture the Biltmore a record four times.

The Tour moved on, but the Biltmore maintained its place in golf history by hosting the Junior Orange Bowl International Golf Championship for 49 years since 1964. Names like Nick Price, Jose Maria Olazabal, Tiger Woods, Craig Stadler, Hal Sutton, Bob Tway, Mark Calcavecchia, Helen Alfredson, Gary Koch, Annika



The Par 5, 15th hole with an approach shot over the Coral Gables Waterway. Photo by Joel Jackson.

SUPERINTENDENT FACTS

Meet Bryan Singleton

Originally from:

Born in Washington, DC. Grew up in Beltsville, MD

Family: Wife Liz. Daughter, Jaqueline. 8-month old Beagle named Birdie.

Education: BS in Agronomy from "The" Pennsylvania State University

Employment history:

1983-1986 superintendent of the North Course, Wilmington CC, Wilmington, DE; 1987-1991 assistant superintendent, Card Sound Golf Course, Key Largo, FL; 1991-2006 superintendent Riviera CC, Coral Gables; 2006-Present superintendent Biltmore GC, Coral Gables.

How did you get into the business: I began working on golf courses as a summer job while in high school. Really, it's the only work I have ever done.

Professional affiliations/awards: 28-year member of the GCSAA. South Florida GCSA and FGCSA member since 1987. SFGCSA sec/treasurer in 1997-2000. SFGCSA president in 2000-01. Served on the Missing & Exploited Children Tournament since 1995. Received the FGCSA President's Award in 2011 for Lifetime Service.

Goals/Accomplishments: To maintain the best golf course I can and to treat others with respect. I have been involved in five major course renovations. I appreciated being recognized by my peers with the 2011 President's Award.

Personal philosophy of work: You have to enjoy what you do and give your best every day. I would advise a young person coming out of college to select a superintendent to work for who has a history of helping place their assistants into superintendent positions. Also, unless you have a pension plan at work start your own IRA account as soon as you can.

Personal memorable moments: Playing the Royal Dublin Club in Ireland with my dad and going to the 1997 Masters with my dad and fellow superintendent and friend Dave Klinkhammer.

Hobbies and Interests: Golf, relaxing at the beach with a good book, and fishing.



BRYAN SINGLETON

Photo by Joel Jackson.

Sorenstam and Paula Creamer can be found among many others in the Junior Orange Bowl Hall of Fame.

For many foreign players like Olazabal and Price, it was their first venture on American soil. They qualified abroad by winning their national championships.

These facts and other anecdotes came courtesy of J. R. Steinbauer, tournament chairman, whom superintendent Bryan Singleton had invited to his office to share the importance of the Biltmore in the history of that premier amateur event.

"We cannot praise Bryan and his staff enough for the outstanding job they do preparing this course to top level conditions required for our



One of the renovated original bridges crossing the Coral Gables Waterway. In the background is the Par 3, 12th green. Imagine a Venetian gondola heading to Biscayne Bay. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Behind the trees on the Par 3, 14th hole and across Bird Road lies the Riviera Country Club which for twenty years was part of the Biltmore property. Photo by Joel Jackson.

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world class players,” Steinbauer said.

The Jazz Era: 1926 - 1942

Let’s go back to the beginning. Developer George Merrick teamed with Biltmore hotel magnate John McEntee Bowman at the height of the Florida land boom in the 1920s to build “a great hotel.” The property would serve the crowds of people thronging to the Miami area and would also serve as a center of sports and fashion.

The architects hired to design the hotel were Leonard Schultze and S. Fuller Weaver, who already had the Atlanta and Los Angeles Biltmores, New York’s Grand Central Terminal, Miami Beach’s Nautilus Hotel (later the first location of the Mt. Sinai Medical Center). They also did the famed Miami Daily News Tower (now known as the Freedom Tower) downtown on Biscayne Boulevard across from the American Airlines Arena, home of the Miami Heat.

In November 1925, the Ross-designed course opened and, a few months later on January 15, 1926, the hotel opened its doors to its first guests, including socialites from the Northeast who traveled down on trains marked “Miami Biltmore Specials.”

Visitors during this era included frequent prominent guests, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Ginger Rodgers, Judy Garland and Bing Crosby. Everyone who was anyone stayed at the Biltmore from President Franklin D. Roosevelt to gangster Al Capone. During the late 1920s and early 1930s during the Wall Street plunge, the hotel still thrived by hosting aquatic galas drawing huge crowds on Sundays to watch synchronized swimmers, bathing beauties, alligator wrestlers and the four year-old boy wonder Jackie Ott, whose act included diving into the swimming pool from an 85-foot

high platform. Johnny Weismuller, the tree-swinging Tarzan of my youth, was a Biltmore swimming instructor and even broke some records at the immense Biltmore pool.

The War Years: 1942 - 1968

In the period covering World War II to Vietnam, the War Department converted the hotel to a hospital called the Army Air Forces Regional

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Hospital. In the conversion, many of the windows were sealed with concrete and the travertine marble floors were covered with government-issued linoleum. It was also the early site of the University of Miami’s School of Medicine. This was the Biltmore Hotel I knew during my Coast Guard days in Miami. It was also during this period, in 1945, that the property was cut in half. The 18 holes adjacent to the hotel



From the back of the practice green looking out across the 7th green and the 8th, 5th and 15th holes. A true 1920's parkland layout.

remained under the city's control, while the other half was sold and became and remains the Riviera Country Club.

A New Era Begins: 1983 - Present

In 1973 a coalition of the city officials and residents of Coral Gables lobbied for the city's acquisition of the property and was granted ownership under the Historic Monuments Act and Legacy

of Parks program. Another ten years elapsed before the city initiated a full restoration of the Biltmore Hotel.

Four years and \$55 million later, the hotel reopened Dec. 31, 1987 as a four-star hotel and resort. Three years later, at the height of the economic crisis of 1990, it shut down yet again.

In 1992, the Seaway Hotels Corporation, a Florida hotel

management firm, leading a multi-national consortium, became the Biltmore's owner and operator. The company's portfolio also includes the Alexander Hotel on Miami Beach and the Sheraton Sand Key on Clearwater Beach. Seaway embarked upon a \$40 million, 10-year renovation plan that concluded just recently. The City of Coral Gables still owns the golf course

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Photo by Joel Jackson.

property, but Seaway operates it under a lease/owner arrangement. The city spent around \$3 million to restore the historic championship golf course, which included a complete Brian Silva restoration in 2007, but more on that later.

All guest rooms were renovated and other improvements included a state-of-the-art fitness center and spa. The

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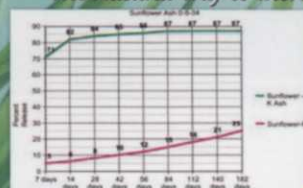
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