

Aerial shot of Orlando, site of the International Conference and Show.

Orlando: More than booths and classrooms

By MIKE JAMISON

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference & Show has an impressive lineup of workshops and seminars, and an expo full of exciting new companies and established successful businesses.

But even the most dedicated of attendees can spend only so much time increasing knowledge, sharpening job skills and gathering informa-

tion on new products and services.

Then there must be time for fun, especially in Orlando, the world's No. 1 vacation destination.

The entire world knows about "the worlds" — Disney World, Sea World and all the other major attractions in the area. And they are certainly worth consideration when deciding how to spend your free time.

But there are other, less-traveled places to visit and interesting things to do.

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Past presidents offer insights, advice

By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — When incoming President Dave Fearis picks up the gavel for the first time at February's International Conference and Show in Orlando, he will be following in the footsteps of 62 other men who have led the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America to the prominent position the association enjoys today.

The golf industry has changed dramatically since Colonel John Morley was voted the association's first president back in 1926. The men who have followed him have been in a unique position to observe the changes in the golf industry.

We contacted as many of the GCSAA's former and soon-to-be-former presidents as possible and asked them two questions:

- What is the biggest change you've observed in the golf industry during your career?

- What single piece of advice would you give to incoming President Fearis?

Following are their responses:

George Renault — 1998 — Director of golf and grounds, Eagle's Creek Country Club, Naples, Fla.

Biggest change: "The effort to increase awareness of what the superintendent does within the industry and with the golfing populace. We have a lot more

work to do. It's understood at the better clubs. Everyone's got to sell themselves and we're trying to give them the tools to do it."

Advice for Dave: "Just be yourself and let your instincts guide you. Don't read too much into anything."

Paul McGinnis — 1997 — Head superintendent, Alta Mesa Country Club, Mesa, Ariz.

Biggest change: "In my 25 years, the No. 1 thing is the increase in the demand for quality at golf courses. Superintendents

are held to such a high standard that they are expected to maintain day in and day out. One of my first clubs was a 54-hole complex where we were mowing tees at 1 inch, fairways at 1-1/4 inches because

the ryegrass looked good. We weren't concerned as much about playability or what the golfer thought. Now that's completely reversed where sometimes we force mowing heights down because of what the golfer expects day in and day out."

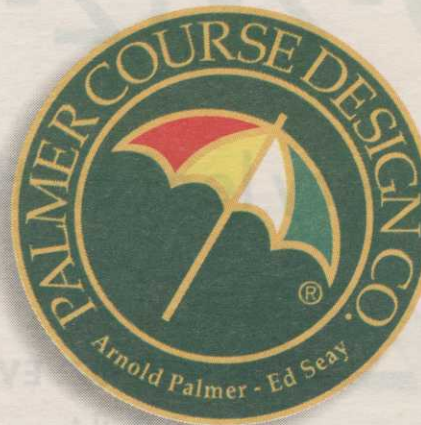
Advice for Dave: "Enjoy the ride and hold on tight. He's going to be so busy."

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Paul McGinnis

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Ewoldt wins 1999 Leo Feser Award

ORLANDO, Fla. — Certified golf course superintendent Don Ewoldt of Sand Creek Country Club in Chesterton, Ind., will be presented the 1999 Leo Feser Award Wednesday, Feb. 10 at the Opening Session of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) 70th International Golf Course Conference and Show here.

The annual GCSAA award honors the best superintendent-authored article, published in the association's monthly magazine, *Golf Course Management*. The winner's name is engraved on a plaque for display at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas.

GCSAA's Publications Committee selected Ewoldt's article, "The Restoration of Sand Creek," which was published in the February 1998 issue of the magazine. The piece detailed Ewoldt's experiences as project manager for a one-month restoration effort to stabilize eroding creek banks. He also included nearly a dozen photographs of the process.

"We can relate to those articles and I always turn to the superintendent-written articles first," he said. "With this, if someone else is doing the same type of project, they can call me and I can pass on what I know."

"Winning the award is very gratifying. But I didn't write it to win the award."

A GCSAA member for 12 years and a graduate of Iowa State with a bachelor's degree in agronomy, Ewoldt has been at Sand Creek Country Club since 1993. He also has been named a chapter winner for the 1999 Environmental Steward Awards and is actively involved with community activities including the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Schools.

The award honors Leo Feser, a pioneer golf course superintendent and a charter member of GCSAA. Feser is credited with keeping the association's official publication alive during the Great Depression.

Past presidents

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You don't realize the full scope of being president until you're there. I was out of town last year for a three-day weekend and when I came back, I had 40 voice messages. I don't even know 40 people. Sometimes it can be overwhelming. But it's a great experience."

Bruce Williams — 1996 — Director of golf operations, Los Angeles CC.

Biggest change: We've gone from the Arnie's Army era to the Tiger Woods

phenomenon, during which we've seen golf on television and the development of golf for the masses.



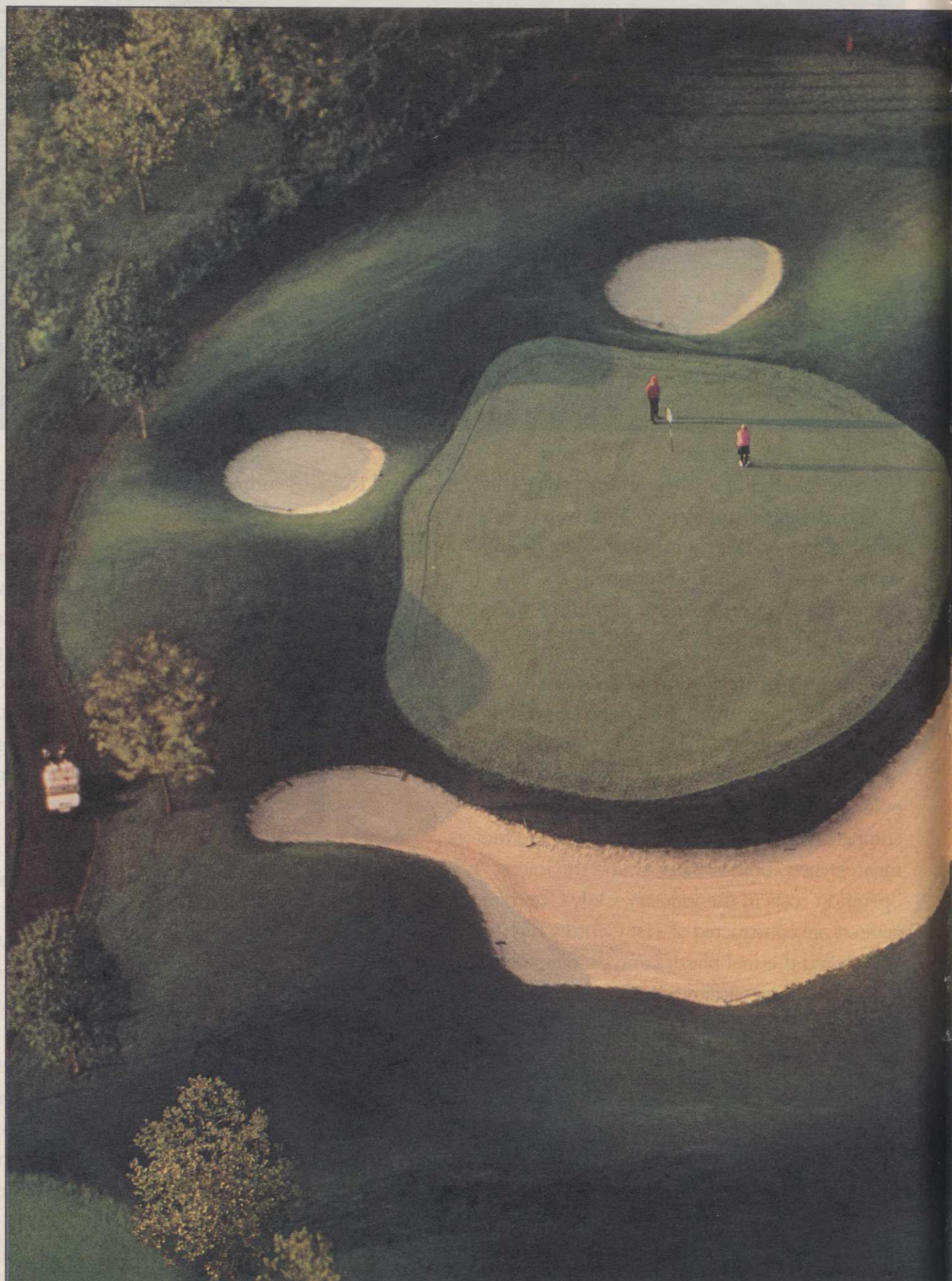
Bruce Williams

Coupled with this, we have a population that is very mobile. Back in the 1930s and 1940s, you played your own course and maybe another one here or there. But today, people on business or vacation travel worldwide and they have higher levels of expectations than ever before. Pat the superintendents

on the back. The standards and level of golf course maintenance have risen not only for private courses, but for public and resort venues, too. That's challenged superintendents to provide outstanding course conditions every day their courses are open. The winner is the golfer, who is enjoying playing conditions on public courses that were only available on private courses 20 years ago.

Advice for Dave: "Manage your time effectively. The demands for your time are on you from all different angles and you have to give justice to family, place of

Continued on next page



Show schedule

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6-8:30 p.m. — GCSAA's Recognition Ceremony and Reception

9-11 p.m. — President's Dinner Show

Sunday, February 14

6:30-7:30 a.m. — Prayer Breakfast

8:30-11:30 a.m. — United States Golf Association Green Section Educational Program

8 a.m.-1 p.m. — Conference Registration Open

9 a.m.-Noon — International Summit

9 a.m.-Noon — Turf Equipment Technicians Association Session

9 a.m.-1 p.m. — Trade Show

12:30 p.m. — 18-Hole Challenge Prize Drawing

Past presidents

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employment and the association. It's a challenge to budget your time properly. The one thing people are always surprised about is the huge time commitment during that one year. It jumps 30 to 40 percent. When you're president you get the normal mailings, but you may get an extra 20 pages of faxes a day, 10 to 12 phone calls from people who want to talk to the man at the top. Your time commitments to family and job don't change. I remember the time commitment when I was

president being another 20 hours a week...We end up taking it away from family and personal time."

Gary Grigg — 1995 — Head superintendent, Royal Poinciana Golf Club, Naples, Fla. Recently completed a 36-hole Art Hills renovation of the original design and is building a new maintenance facility.

Biggest change: "Turf students need to take more business courses than they used to. This is not as technical a business as it used to be in terms of agronomy and horticulture. It's shifting toward business, employee and risk management. I

used to spend most of my time on the golf course. Now it just feels good to occasionally get out there."



Gary Grigg

Advice for Dave: "The thing David's got going for him is that he's been at his club for a lot of years and has the total support of his club. If you don't have the total, 100-percent support from your club... The club usually comes first and the family comes second. It should be the other way

around, but the two get intermingled."

Joseph Baidy — 1994 — Director of courses and grounds, Turning Stone Casino Resort, a 27-hole Rick Smith design in Verona, N.Y., being built by the Oneida Indian Nation and scheduled to open its first nine holes in August, 1999.



Joseph Baidy

Biggest change: "I've been on golf courses since 1950. The playing conditions, equipment and demands on the golf course superintendent have all changed greatly. The profession demands a more professional management style and greater knowledge of the environment."

Advice for Dave: "Keep an open mind and try to project what the needs of the membership will be."

Randy Nichols — 1993 — Director of golf maintenance, Cherokee Town & CC in Atlanta. The 36-hole facility is in the midst of a Tom Fazio-designed renovation.



Randy Nichols

Biggest change: "The increased level of maintenance and the demands put on the golf course superintendent to provide tournament-level playing conditions almost every day."

Advice for Dave: "Listen to the membership and be cognizant of serving all the members."

William Roberts — 1992 — Partner R&G Management, operator of Red Fox Run Golf Course, Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich., and first-year law student at Cooley Law School in Lansing, Mich.



William Roberts

Biggest change: "Increased expertise of superintendents, enhancement of a very professional approach to the golf business, and increased recognition of the impact golf course maintenance/management has on the total golf industry."

Advice for Dave: "Enjoy your year as president as much as possible."

Stephen Cadenelli — 1991 — Course and clubhouse manager of Cape Cod National Golf Club, a Brian Silva design that opened last June in Brewster, Mass.



Stephen Cadenelli

Biggest change: "The heightened expectations of golf course maintenance on a daily basis. Course managers have always sought to improve things.

But at the same time, with technological advances and our own knowledge, we're providing conditions that just 20 years ago were unheard of on a daily basis. The tremendous exposure of televised golf and the conditions those courses provide for a short period of time create a level of expectation that any course at most any time should be perfect. But there is a lack of understanding of what it takes to do

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Past presidents

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that in terms of financial resources and the differences of one course from another."

Advice for Dave: "Enjoy the time. It's very special and will go by very quickly."

Gerald Faubel—1990—Manager of golf course and grounds, Saginaw (Mich.) Country Club.

Biggest change: "Many new

players don't really know the etique



Gerald Faubel

They want Augusta National-like

qu Shore of golf and don't have an understanding of the game. Their expectations are much greater.

conditions all the time. And they tend to play in competition with one another rather than trying to simply meet the challenge of the course."

Advice for Dave: "I've told every president since I was there to enjoy yourself and include your family. Your job is to represent our profession as it relates to the golf course industry."

Dennis Lyon—1989—Man-

ager of golf, City of Aurora, Colo., which has six courses with one under construction, Murphy Creek, a Ken Kavanagh design scheduled to open in 1999.

Biggest change: "Government regulation and the practicing superintendents' level of expertise have increased tremendously. With the two courses we've built in the 1990s, we got involved in wetland mitigation,

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency. I'm not saying that's bad; there is just a lot more concern with the environment that we have to accommodate. We



Dennis Lyon

know how far we've come on the professional side in terms of growing grass. But we've also come a long way on the managerial side, in terms of people management, diversity and the bottom line."

Advice for Dave: "Carry the message of GCSAA as far and wide as possible and enjoy yourself."

John Segui—1988—Retired. Living in Berwyn, Pa.

Biggest change: "Superintendents have moved toward light-weight mowing on fairways. We've always done that on the greens, but now you're even seeing it on fairways. The demand for green speed has really gone off the wall. The greens on many of these older courses just weren't meant to support the speeds you're seeing today."

Advice for Dave: "Enjoy it, but don't get too tied up in it. There is life after the GCSAA presidency."

Donald Hearn—1987—Head superintendent, Weston (Mass.) Golf Club.

Biggest change: "The lowering of cutting heights. Twenty-seven years ago we were mowing our



Donald Hearn

fairways twice a week at 1-inch height; now we're at three times a week at 5/8-inch. Tees and aprons were twice a week at 3/4-inch; now we're three times a week at 7/16-inch. Greens were four days a week and now we're at six."

Advice for Dave: "Don't listen to anybody. Make your own decisions. You'll make some mistakes, just like we all did. If you try to please everybody, you'll please nobody."

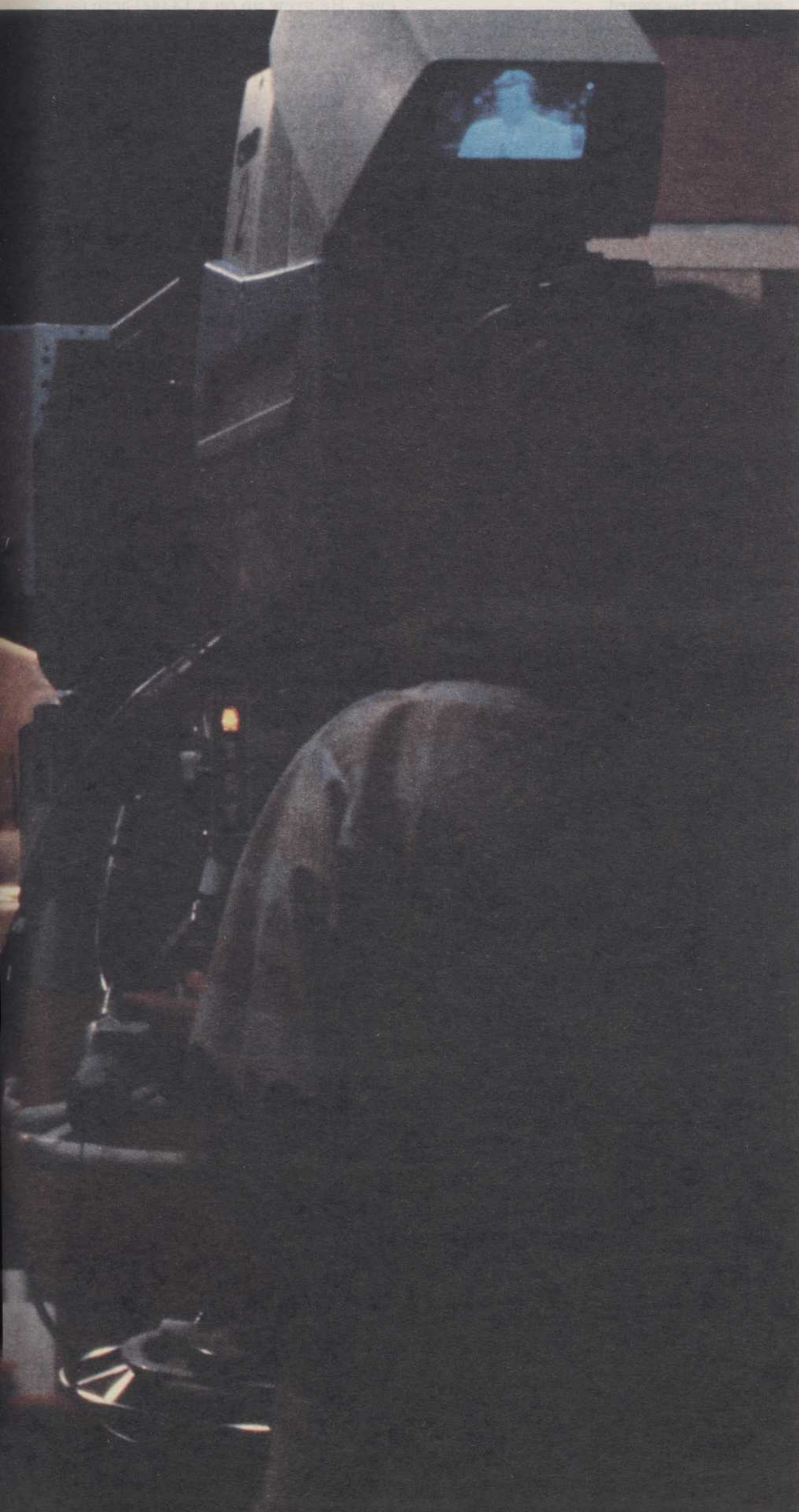
Riley Stottern—1986—Head superintendent, Casa Blanca Golf Club, Mesquite, Nev.

Biggest change: "The advances in computer technology in terms of business operations, irrigation and communication have changed the superintendent's role significantly."

Advice for Dave: "Take care of GCSAA and its members, but watch out for and take care of your family first. That's not easy, but it's very important."

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becoming a victim of air pollution.



Ahh, television news in the 90s.

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Past Presidents

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Eugene Baston — 1985 — Superintendent and maintenance director, Anyang Benest Golf Club, Kyonggi-Do, South Korea. Also lives part of the year in Georgia.

Biggest change: "The advent of the new grass varieties and advances in light-weight maintenance equipment over the past 10 years. The breeding programs with the bentgrasses, particularly in the Southeast, have yielded more tolerant bents. It's still not easy to grow bentgrass down here, but it's easier than it was."

Advice for Dave: "Develop a sense of humor and a thick skin. Seriously, the

association is going in the right direction. Most of all, he should encourage everybody to keep up with the advances in the industry, particularly in terms of computer usage."

James Timmerman — 1984 — Golf course superintendent Orchard Lake (Mich.) Country Club.

Biggest change: The advances in technology, which will probably even accelerate. Keeping up with everything is even more difficult than it used to be.

Advice for Dave: Be aware of the whole spectrum of superintendents, not just certain segments like the private club industry. Every superintendent, from the smallest Mom-and-Pop operation up to the most exclusive private club has certain needs. Be aware of them and try to tailor programs to meet those needs.

Robert Osterman — 1983 — Retired. Living in Bethel, Conn.

James Wyllie — 1982 — Retired. Consulting with golf course architect Tom McBroom and living in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

Biggest change: "The quality of the turf is the biggest change. Fairways today are the same quality as greens were in the 1950s. Bunkers are often manicured to the point where they are no longer hazards."

Advice for Dave: "Continue to build on the excellent educational tools that GC-SAA provides to its members and the public. The superintendent today is an integral part of the management team and needs business skills along with agronomic knowledge. However, this advanced technology must be combined with the basic fundamentals and common sense so necessary for all good keepers of the green."

Michael Bavier — 1981 — Head superintendent, Inverness Golf Club, Palatine, Ill.

Biggest change: "People play and see many more courses than they used to, so we end up being compared to Augusta National and places like that. People are demanding more because they've seen



Michael Bavier

more. They are also playing more. We used to have very few midweek players. Now it's not unusual to get 150 to 200 rounds midweek at what is a very private club. We've doubled our crew

size in the past 25 years to keep up with the demands."

Advice for Dave: "You've got to decide on your priorities. Association, family and club top the list. You have to juggle the traveling and demands of being president of this association, while not forgetting about family and your job. Many guys have found that they've had to move on to a new job shortly after being president. Dave's a sharp guy and should do very well."

Melvin Lucas — 1980 — Retired. Consulting with architects Northeast Golf (Rob McNeil) and G&G Hauser of Vienna, Austria. Living in South Dartmouth, Mass.



Melvin Lucas

Biggest change: "A superintendent's tenure at a course isn't as long as it used to be during my dad's and my time. Make a few mistakes today, and you are out of a job. Job security is not what it used to be. There is a plethora of young, well-educated people out there looking to get head superintendent jobs, but they don't have a lot of experience, and that concerns me."

Advice for Dave: "GCSAA should recognize that we are the international leader in golf greenkeeping. We should embrace and enlarge that community feeling that we (US and Canada) are the leaders."

Charles Tadge — 1979 — District superintendent for the Hamilton County Park District, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Biggest change: Technology, with all the computerized irrigation systems and the Global Positioning Systems. There are things you can do now that you wouldn't ever have thought about doing years ago. So it probably doesn't make for less work, but it does make it easier to accomplish things.

Advice for Dave: Keep on top of membership services and keep providing good things for the members.

George Cleaver — 1978 — Retired from the golf business in 1982. Operating a floor refinishing business in Lewes, Del. 1926-1977 next month in GCN.

Cornish/Graves

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members on using a team approach to permitting and construction monitoring; and architect Mark Mungeam (a Cornish protege) on training an architect.

Loaded with photographs and drawings, this book could be to those interested in designing a golf course today what Cornish and Ron Whitten's *The Architects of Golf* is to people interested in golf course design yesterday.

Golf Course Design, 446 pages, hardcover, \$54.95, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., distributed through major book stores and through foreign channels in Asia, Australia and Europe.

Good Doctor

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when they would install irrigation on the great links of the British Isles.

• Regarding narrow fairways bordered by long grass, it "makes bad golfers! And narrow fairways destroy the harmony and continuity of the game, causing a stilted and cramped style, destroying all freedom of play and creative shotmaking. And isn't that the real joy of the game? Creating shots and making bold recovery plays?"

• Regarding green committees, "Many have ruined my handiwork by planting trees like rows of soldiers along the borders of the fairways and turning once beautiful properties into jungles."

• Regarding length, "No other game has the diversity of playing fields golf has, yet I have seen many courses ruined in an attempt to extend them to so-called 'championship' standards."

During a diatribe against "the disturbing trend" toward stroke play in competitive events, MacKenzie says: "Many poor and downright dull courses have been made in the last 60 years in a futile attempt to eliminate the element of luck. You can no more eliminate luck in golf than you can in any sport or in life. You can't punish every bad golf shot, and you can't create situations where complete fairness is assured. If you succeeded you would only make the game, and life, uninteresting."

Bemoaning his belief that modern design work is more consumed with the scientific side of construction than artistry, he says: "The result will be a generation of courses that will be seen for what they really are: expanses of green grass, trees and water, merely for socking the ball around and nothing else."

For his part, the narrator declares of Augusta National: "There was virtually nothing left of the Doctor's original design at Augusta other than the routing and a couple of bunkers."

And he tells Mackenzie he can't ask Augusta National's greens committee "if the fool who built the 16th green was drunk and blind."

Well, the Good Doctor gets his site for a final golf course — a property on the ocean in San Diego with grassed-over dunes, sandy soil and undulating land.

The rest is yours to read. Look for folks you know. (For instance, I found Dan Proctor and Dave Axland, identified only as Dan and Dave, two of the world's great shapers.)

There are others, believe me. One in particular I'd like readers to hazard a guess at.

Tell me, who is Bill Mario? Let me know who you believe he is through fax (207-846-0657) or e-mail (mleslie@golfcoursenews.com).

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