

LINKS ACROSS AMERICA

Many of you might not know this, but in the fall of 2008, the Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation launched its Links Across America (LAA) initiative to develop feeder short golf courses – three, six or nine-hole – across the country to provide affordable golf for youth, families, adult beginners and individuals with injuries and disabilities.

Last year, two LAA short course facilities were completed: The Dundee Park District west of Chicago, a five-hole par 3 short course & short game area; and The First Tee of Savannah, Georgia, a three-hole short course and driving range. Likewise, the list of corporate partners has grown to 46.

And during the last six months, interest in the LAA initiative has gained momentum. Early spring of 2011 construction will commence on a three-hole short course (two par 4's and a par 3), driving range, and short game area for The First Tee of NW Arkansas near Bentonville. Then in May, a unique six-hole par 3 short course located at the Rockwood 18-hole golf course owned by the City of Ft. Worth, Texas, will be underway. By late spring major re-grassing and irrigation will be completed enabling The First Tee

of Harrisonburg, Va., to reopen their three-hole par 3 short course.

With 13 other short course projects currently in the planning/design stage, the Wadsworth Foundation tells GCI the next two years will be very busy. In 2012, a minimum of six to seven LAA projects will be under construction followed in 2013 by about that same number.

Prior to launching the LAA initiative in the fall of 2008, the Wadsworth Foundation spent several years researching the reasons why the growth of the game is stagnant; what needs to change and whether there is a need for short course development. Here's what they found:

- "Affordable golf, especially for youth is a major problem throughout the country. According to the National Golf Foundation report, from 2006 thru 2008, we lost 900,000 young golfers from the ages of 6 thru 17."

- "Each year the industry is losing a significant number of the short 'value' courses where golfers learn to play. The NGF reported from 2004 – 2008 there were 530 golf course closures and of this total 200 were the short courses, the stand alone 9-hole, par 3's and executives."



- "New players to the game need the option and opportunity to play golf in less time because today individuals and families are faced with many time constraints. Three, six or nine-holes facilities provide that advantage."

- "Golf must become 'fun' again."
- "After the golf lessons there needs to be a Step #2. The lessons, clinics, junior programs, Play Golf America, etc., have been successful teaching beginners of all ages how to swing the club and hit the ball. Then the new golfer asks 'What is the next step so I can get out there and learn to actually play golf?' Around the country the majority of lesson programs do not provide this second step and therefore, there is minimal expansion of new golfers into the game."

- "In society today, there is not a better sport than golf that teaches the lessons by which to live life, but that can only happen, by having the opportunity to tee it up and play the game."

- "The short courses must be accessible for individuals with injuries and disabilities."

KANGAROO ROUNDUP

Here at GCI Galactic Headquarters we've documented some pretty strange invaders destroying golf course greens. We've chronicled everything from the norm – deer and geese – to the more unusual, such as wild hogs, skunks and the occasional drunk driver.

Heck, we've even reported an invasion of pirates (see October's Whiteboard) on one English course!

But according to the Australian newspaper, Joondalup Times, kangaroos have become a major irritant at the Joondalup Resort Golf Course. Apparently, Australian Department of Environment and Conservation officials were called in last year to cull kangaroos that were damaging the course. CRIKEY!!!

Originally, kangaroos were not suspected for leaving 60 to 70 holes per night on the course's greens. It was only after course staff staged an overnight sting operation to monitor the greens that the roos' ruse was revealed.

Several alternatives were tried, such as using different fertilizers and other materials on the greens to deter the hoppers, but nothing worked. So, in August and September, licensed DEC officers shot 13 kangaroos that were seen damaging the course.

Shooting kangaroos on the Joondalup Resort golf course was the last option, according to course superintendent Ashley Watson. Since the cull, the damage has ceased.



ROLL CALL

WCI Communities named **Tom Skotzke** golf course superintendent at Pelican Preserve, Ft. Myers, Fla.

Mark Wilson, CGCS, joined The Hill Co. to serve as its lead agronomic advisor and as a member of its Midwest sales team.

Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. appointed **Patrick Karnick** as president. Former president, Tom Shapland, will focus on business development.

Sebring (Fla.) City Council hired **Mark A. Hopkins** to run the city's municipal golf course.

Bayer Environmental Science (BES) announced **Jason Frank** joined the company as a field sales representative for the southern region on the golf and lawncare sales market in southwest Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The GCSAA selected **P.J. McGuire**, director of golf course maintenance for Par 4 Golf Management Co., Las Vegas, to receive its 2011 Excellence in Government Relations Award.

PrimeraTurf Inc. CEO **Frans Jager** announced his retirement from the company effective Sept. 30, 2011.

The Mesquite Golf Club (**Travis Sales**, manager of parks services and golf course superintendent) was chosen by the Texas Turfgrass Association for Golf Course Renovation Project of the Year.

Aaron Thomas, a member of the original staff that unveiled The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club, Dove Mountain in 2009, has returned to the award-winning golf course as director of grounds.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) selected **Richard Pavlasek**, CGCS, director of golf course maintenance at Gainey Ranch Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., as the its field staff representative for the Southwest region of the country (California, Hawaii, Nevada and Arizona).



Get a *life*

GCI's quest to spotlight peoples' lives outside of turf

WHO: Carmen Magro, CGCS, vice president of agronomy for Advanced Sensor Technologies, a Philadelphia-based maker of wireless soil-monitoring systems.

HIS LIFE OUTSIDE OF TURF:

In his spare time, which he admits there is not enough of, Carmen is pursuing his passion for music. This piano man has self recorded a number of original works, and he's currently working with a producer on his first album. "For me, music is more than a hobby. It's really an extension of who I am."

SOUNDS LIKE: "I'd say my songs are piano-oriented upbeat rock tunes with a strong ballad feel. I've been told by some people that I remind them of a young Neil Diamond."

WHAT INSPIRES HIS MUSIC:

"I'm inspired by meaningful music, songs that have stories behind them. Springsteen is a master of the art of storytelling through his songs."

ARTIST HE'D LOVE TO OPEN FOR:

"Definitely U2. I think U2 is one of the best performing bands on the planet."

SAMPLE HIS MUSIC:

Check out Carmen's "America" on YouTube. Just enter "Carmen Magro-America" into the YouTube browser.

WHERE YOU CAN SEE HIM NEXT:

Don't be surprised to find Carmen in front of a mic at an Orlando piano bar or karaoke joint during GIS.

If you have a passion you'd like to share, email us at gci@gie.net.