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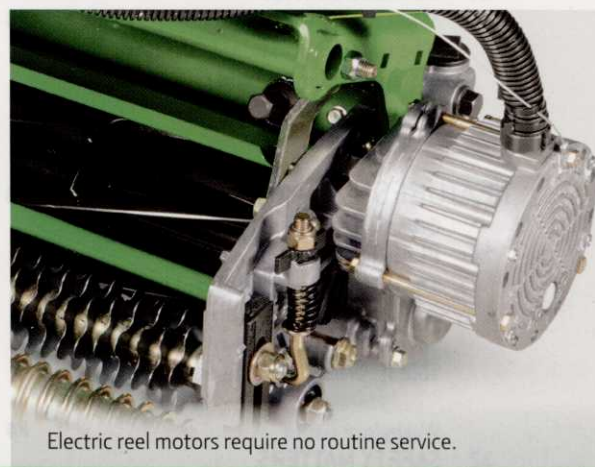
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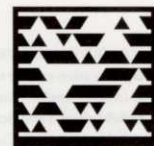
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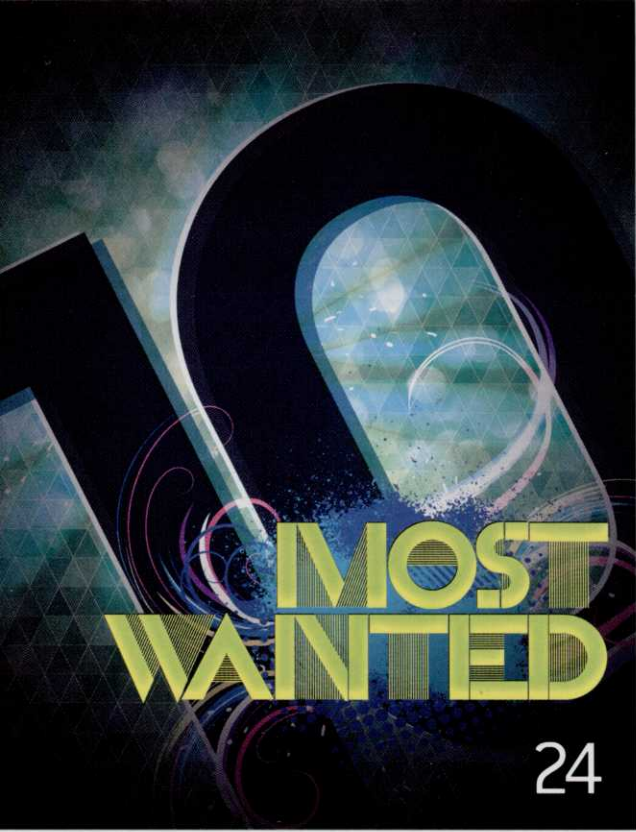


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24

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MY BRAIN ON TIM

Warning: Spending two hours with Tim Hiers can make your head explode. A few weeks ago, I was in south Florida to speak on “career management in the new normal” to a great group of assistant superintendents from the Everglades GCSA. I had some extra time in my schedule, so I called my old friend Tim Hiers, CGCS, the legendary Naples-area super, and he graciously agreed to show me around The Old Collier Golf Club.

Now, unless you’ve been under a rock for three decades, you probably know Tim is not just a leader in environmental golf course management, he’s been driving the pace car.

Moments after arriving at the club, I was in the passenger seat of his vehicle flying around the course, attempting (poorly) to take notes on my iPad as we bolted from spot to spot to see examples of what his team has done.

Tim spewed statistics and metrics like an over-caffeinated Harvard business prof. In all the years I’ve known him, I’ve never once heard Tim say anything without backing it up with a seemingly unassailable fact. I’m fairly sure he has a photographic memory.

Due to Tim’s rapid-fire delivery and the fact we were going about 30 mph, my notes from our whirlwind excursion around Old Collier are a mess. He briefed me about Platinum paspalum, the tough-as-nails turf he helped Dr. Ronnie Duncan develop to cope with the poor water quality he deals with daily. His brackish water is so awful (“Second worst in the world behind a course in Dubai that irrigates with desalinated sea water.”) that Toro Irrigation used what they learned at Old Collier to redesign some of their products.

He showed me the many wildlife corridors they’ve created around the course that are home to dozens of species...some endangered or threatened. We stopped numerous times to check out planted areas with vegetation from around the world, some of it personally selected and planted by our mutual friend Jan Beljan, the former Fazio golf course designer who doubles as a passionate landscaping guru.

In preparation for the rainy season, the course was closed and ripped up completely by aerification. We stopped to watch the process,

including the demo of a potential new piece of equipment that would reduce the manpower required. Tim, as always, had done the math and knew that if the huge new vacuum performed as advertised it would pay for itself in 3.2 years (give or take a week).

The average Old Collier member is probably not that interested in the amazing things Tim has done to make the facility greener and leaner. However, his owners – the revered Collier family – are quite interested. They’re committed to sustainability in everything their vast company does. It’s simply part of the culture for them so Tim, who has arguably been the Old Tom Morris of sustainability in golf, is a perfect fit.

But what does “sustainability” even mean?

For Tim, it comes down to one simple thing...can it be replicated elsewhere? He ticks off dozens of small things he does to ensure all the little stuff has a big impact on the course. Each of them could work at nearly any other course.

But, off the course in his office is where his eyes seem to shimmer most brightly when he talks about everything he’s done to conserve energy –

install low-power lighting, find just the right ice machines and A/C units, reuse materials. Get this: his average electric bill for his entire maintenance facility is less than \$600 per month. He’s so focused on energy savings he has Florida Power & Light on speed dial. Hell, they probably have him on speed dial to find out how he does it.

That’s when it dawned on me. As I sorted through what he’d crammed in my cranium in 128 minutes, I realized my friend – a man consistently recognized as the Pied Piper of “greener golf” – isn’t motivated by some lofty sense of environmentalism. He is – and I mean this in the nicest way possible – cheap.

He hates waste. He loathes using resources unnecessarily. He despises the unnecessary or the extra. He is – to put it simply – frugal.

Frugality gets a bad rap. It sort of sounds old fashioned or Amish. Yet, it’s one of our finest virtues. And, for a successful golf course superintendent, it’s a core value. Think about it. Be like Tim. Be frugal...and prosper. GCI



Pat Jones
Editorial director and publisher

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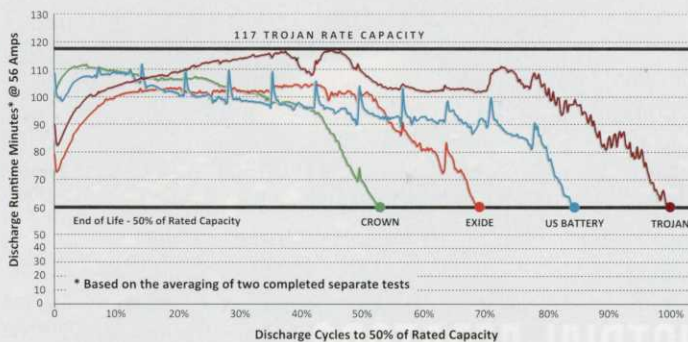




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We'd like to hear from you.

E-mail us at gci@gje.net with your thoughts and opinions.

Past presidents

Mr. Monroe Miller,

Like you, I have had the honor to have known and worked with many of the GC-SAA presidents over the years ("Presidents I Have Known," March 2012). Having served two years on the GCSAA BOD myself I know the time and dedication it takes to serve as GCSAA president and have a great deal of respect for all who have answered the call to serve.

Having the great privilege of being a chapter member of GCSANC, I also have had the honor to know and work with Cliff and Myrtle Wagoner for over 30 years. I was pleased that, as a GCSAA board member, I was able to help make sure Cliff got some recognition when he attended his 50th GC-SAA Conference several years ago. I thank you for calling for some recognition of the great effort Cliff and Myrtle have made to be

at every GIS even though he has been retired for 25 years or more.

I shared your words from your column with Cliff and he was, as always, greatly honored that he and Myrtle were mentioned in your story. Cliff is very humble and certainly appreciates all the great support he and Myrtle have received from his GCSAA family over the years... especially over the past few years which have been a bit more challenging for them.

Thanks for the great story and keep up the good work.

Gary K. Carls, CGCS
 Past-President GCSANC 2000
 Past-President CGCSA 2002
 Golf Operations Supervisor
 Department of Public Works/Golf Division
 City of Sunnyvale, Calif.

Forced fed

Great article ("You Can Fix Stupid," April 2012)... too bad it was on the last page vs. the lead article... Plus, your last paragraph is so on point. Force me to eat your food by charging a minimum. If it were that good, the club would be on my eating rotation,

Mitchell L. Stump, CPA
 Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Got something to say?

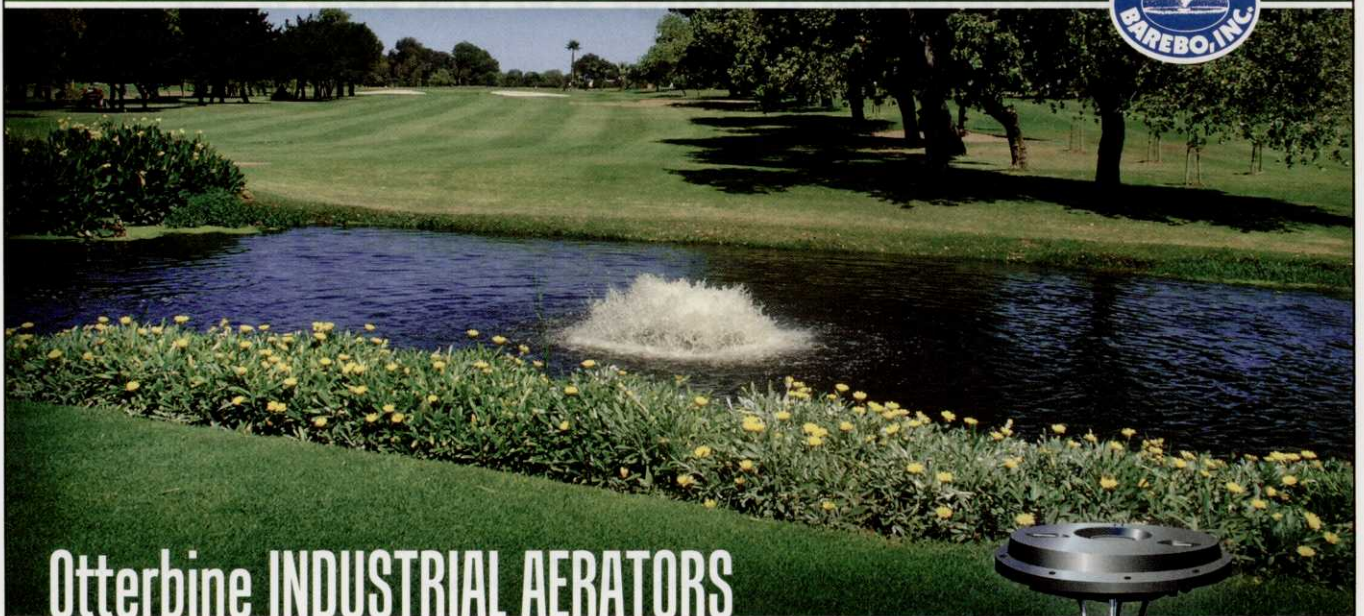
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It's a wash

Beryl might've been classified as a tropical storm when it hit the northeast coast of Florida in late May, but its downgrade as it lost power was exactly what it caused on the Dunes Golf Club: a depression.

As the storm weakened, it should've spent less time pouring rain on the course and surrounding counties, but it lingered long enough to put down 10 inches of rain, according to the National Weather Service.

So much water came down that it washed out several dunes and overwhelmed the drainage systems, uncovering and damaging pipes in the process, closing the course temporarily.

Course maintenance crews are still working to repair the damage, according to general manager Jim Cocchi, but they should be wrapped up in time for a June 16 event.

Tropical storm Beryl wore down the Dunes Golf Club with more than 10 inches of rain, enough to wash out large sections of the course.



GOING INTERNATIONAL

GCI's Pat Jones and Bruce Williams embarked on a whirlwind fact-finding tour of golf in Singapore, Bangkok and Tokyo in May, following the launch of the premier issue of GCI International.

As they traveled throughout Southeast Asia, Pat and Bruce kept us updated via Facebook and Twitter. Here are some of our favorite dispatches:

May 17 - Got a great download from Alan Prickett, Jacobsen's golf market guru in Asia, at lunch yesterday along with Bruce Williams and Mike Sebastian. Key finding: the issues facing golf in most Asian countries aren't that different than the U.S. How do we get more people to play? How do you overcome competition for time? How do you revive courses associated with failed residential developments? Half a world away but the problems sound like home.

May 16 - Singapore is one of the most seductive places on earth. Yes, the hotel is marvelous but the people here are amazing. And lunch with Alan Prickett of Jacobsen was worth the trip. Beginning to get a hint of what GCI International can do in Asia, but pretty sure it's going to require lots more fact-finding junkets to completely figure out. :0)

May 15 - Woke up to a hazy sunrise in Singapore to find a golf course out my window.

