

**I**t has been record-breaking dry at Lake Omigosh Golf Club in central Florida. When the 34-day drought ended, superintendent Duffy McDuffy was attending a Golf Course Superintendents Association of America committee meeting in Lawrence, Kan.

Lawrence is the home of the Kansas University Jayhawks. There's not a lot of leisure time to enjoy this historic college town during the packed meeting schedule at headquarters. More than one committee has continued the discussion after hours at the Free State Brewery on Main Street.

When Duffy returned from the meeting, he called and asked if I would meet with him in his office down at the Turf Management Center — still referred to by some as the “barn.” Old habits are hard to change, but these are changing times and I wondered what was on Duffy's mind.

Arriving early for the meeting, I noticed this poem tacked up on the bulletin board:

## THE RAVING

By Duffy Allen Poe

*Once upon an economy dreary  
As I pondered weak and weary  
Would the budget grow once more?  
Quoth the Green Chairman, “Nevermore.”*

*Mowing fairways twice per week  
My budget gets another tweak  
Need to spray, turf looks poor  
Quoth the EPA, “Nevermore.”*

*Member/Guest; cut and roll  
Staff reductions take their toll  
Need 40 hours, maybe more  
Quoth the Finance Committee, “Nevermore.”*

*New programs I must improvise  
All resources maximize  
Now with less I must do more  
Quoth my inner voice, “Evermore.”*

Duffy arrived and explained his meeting was for the Environmental Programs Committee and dealt with the Environmental Institute for Golf's (EIFG) new program called, “Golf's Drive Toward Sustainability.” The GCSAA was amassing facts, figures, case studies, golf BMPs and allied support to create a resource toolbox

# Driving Toward Sustainability

BY JOEL JACKSON



A THREE-PRONGED  
PROGRAM THAT  
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that members' clubs could use to successfully engage in this new program. The committee was made up of superintendents, GCSAA board members and staff, and other allied stakeholders.

Duffy told me, “Frankly, sir, I need your help to get our club leadership and members on board with this program. The activists have so politicized environmental issues that many feel that terms like sustainability are fighting words, instead of a really sound business practice in today's world.

“Sustainability in general and sustainable golf in particular is a three-pronged program that should be sensitive to people, planet and profit. If we don't address the changing customer base, demonstrate sound environmental practices in the face of increasing regulations and manage our business resources wisely, golf as we know it may go the way of the dinosaur.

“It's hard for superintendents to be the instigators of change from the bottom up. We need a team approach to engage our club leadership and members to achieve a working sustainability model. And that, sir, is why I need your help.”

“Duffy, I'll be glad to help,” I said. “I love this game. I love nature. I want good golf courses to be around for my grandchildren to enjoy. And if you don't mind, I'd like to add another verse to your poem on the bulletin board:

*Sustain the game or surely die  
None to act but you and I  
Forget the olden days of yore  
Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore.”*

So long from Lake Omigosh, where the superintendent gives back to his profession, the crew is smaller but better organized, and the members are learning that being sustainable is the smart thing to do.

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*Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.*