

Off The Fringe

Superintendents serve their profession at National Golf Day 2011

By Tim Connolly

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The positive energy was palpable during the recent National Golf Day activities on Capitol Hill, when golf's main organizations converged to engage members of Congress with powerful messages of the game's impact on their constituents.

We Are Golf, a coalition of the industry's top organizations, including the GCSAA, CMAA, NGCOA, PGA of America and the World Golf Foundation, is determined to put a face on the game.

"We're trying to let Congress know that when they make decisions on golf,

to use us as a resource so we can provide them the necessary information so that they're not just making a decision in a vacuum," Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, said.

Jay Goughnour, owner and superintendent of Raccoon Valley Golf Course in Jefferson, Iowa, was there to talk disaster relief for golf courses. His nine-hole course was devastated by flooding in May of 2008.

"When natural disasters affect golf courses, courses should be treated like other small businesses and placed in the same playing field," he said.

Goughnour wants Congress to know that golf faces the same hardships as any other business in this economy. "There are a lot of courses

that struggle to make ends meet. They employ a few people and they're great meeting places and valuable assets to the community, but they're not rich people. I own a nine-hole golf course and I can promise you I'm not rich. I'm just a hard-working individual."

Mike Barrett, CGCS, has been the superintendent at Argyle CC in Silver Spring, Md., for 15 years. For Barrett, We Are Golf's mission to put a face on the game is a key point. "I tell people that the survival and success of Argyle Country Club is paramount to me. It's how I make my living, how I support my family. I have 15 guys. That's how they support their families. People lose sight of just how important golf is. It creates jobs."

"When you look at politics, it's really local," Evans said. "There needs to be a grassroots effort. Just think what that would do to spread the word even that much faster. And that can be done. It just takes some folks who are motivated."

Folks like the group of superintendents who served their profession in the nation's capital on National Golf Day.

Tim Connolly is the assistant superintendent at TPC Potomac at Avenel Farm in Potomac, Md.

Rafael Barajas, CGCS, Robert Randquist, CGCS, and Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, share a laugh during National Golf Day.



The tornado left a wake of destruction across the city.

Recounting the Tuscaloosa tornadoes

By Beth Geraci

Gib Fox and his family huddled in a makeshift teepee in the center of their living room. Fox's two young children were oblivious to what was happening. But Fox and his wife knew darn well what they were dealing with.

A mile and a half away, the Tuscaloosa, Ala., tornado was touching down.

When the worst was over, Fox, the golf course superintendent at Tuscaloosa's Ol' Colony Golf Complex, stepped outside.

"It was black as night and eerily calm," he said. "Everybody says it sounds like a freight train. It sounds worse.



This thing sounded like a group of jets hitting the afterburners at the same time."

The tornado reportedly carved a path 300 miles long from Mississippi to Georgia, traveling at about 180 miles per hour. "We were looking at it as it passed and I was saying, 'This is bad,'" Fox said. "You could see it clear as day."

About a half hour after the tornado struck, as Fox stood in his yard marveling at the eerie calm, the winds picked up again — a second, smaller twister. It swept right over the golf course. "I could see it. It was spinning up the in the air and I could see it," Fox marveled.

Like Fox's home and neighborhood, the golf course was spared damage. Other areas, however, were not so lucky. The death toll reached 41 in Tuscaloosa alone; 30 residents are still missing; and entire neighborhoods are obliterated.

"It looks like you took bulldozers and lined them up in a row and went to work," Fox said. "There's nothing left."

Golfdom Scores Big at 2011 TOCA Communication Contest

We stop here briefly to sing our own praises (don't mind if we do). That's because we earned accolades at the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) contest, bringing home awards for editorial content and graphic design.

Golfdom earned six first place awards, including honors for feature writing (for the story "Giving Thanks"); web writing ("A Golf Course Uplifts a Community"); special projects (Plant Health Report and Water Wise); and headline writing ("I'll Take a... Mulligan"). *Golfdom* also won first place for portrait photography with the June 2010 cover photo of Chris Dalhamer.

Golfdom also garnered two merit awards. "The Best of Both Worlds" won for environmental stewardship article, and the 2010 Annual Putting Surface Guide won for special projects.

Seth Jones won merits for his work last year at *Golf Course Management* magazine, for his operations profile of Whistling Straits and for his cover story on Nick Price.

Congrats, team!



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