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Golfdom

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Off The Fringe

Good Start at Green Start

Assistant superintendents learn from the best in the business at the Sixth Annual Green Start Academy

BY BETH GERACI

The morning air was cool and crisp as 50 assistant golf course superintendents gathered outdoors at the North Carolina State Turfgrass Laboratory. Their nervous excitement was palpable as the sun's pale yellow beams blanketed the property.

It was with that backdrop that the Sixth Annual Green Start Academy got underway, the 50 assistants having been handpicked for the two-day event based on essays they wrote. Green Start was as much a reward for the assistants' ambition and leadership as it was a valuable opportunity for them to propel their careers further still.

Hosted by Bayer Environmental Science and John Deere Golf, this year's Academy comprised two days of educational discussions led by some of the country's most renowned superintendents and turfgrass professionals.

The reputable lineup featured industry heavyweights such as N.C. State turfgrass professor Grady Miller, Ph.D.; certified golf course superintendents Bob Farren (Pinehurst Resort, Pinehurst, N.C.); Patrick Finlen (The Olympic Club, San Francisco); and Paul Grogan (TPC Deere Run, Moline, Ill.); golf business authority Henry DeLozier (Global Golf Advisors); and many others.

Most of the Academy's discussions took place at the Bayer Environmental Science Development and Training Center, a picturesque 281-acre expanse in Clayton, N.C., where Bayer performs turfgrass research.

It was there that the assistants reaped advice and information from some of the best in the business. DeLozier urged the assistants to actively drive up the value of

their clubs, to "use this current economic environment and make it work for you." The GCSAA's Greg Lyman advised them to practice sustainability. Farren, Finlen and Grogan shared words of professional wisdom. And Chris Carson, CGCS, inspired the assistants to make the most of their careers.

"Figure out what you have that others don't and learn how to package it," he advised.

At its core, the Academy was an exercise not only in turfgrass science, business and career advice, but also in networking, motivation and forging new friendships.

"Everyone seemed to gel here," said Chartiers Country Club assistant superintendent Jonathan Dees.

What stood out most prominently about Green Start was the deeply rooted knowledge of all those who presented, and the passion and drive of 50 assistant superintendents determined to leave their mark on the field.



Assistant superintendents prepare for a tour of the Bayer Environmental Science Development and Training Center in Clayton, N.C.

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Off The Fringe

Assistant Scores Free Greens Mower



Stanek on the Toro Greensmaster TriFlex Hybrid she won. "It will have a big impact for golfers," she said.

Lori Stanek, assistant superintendent at Petrifying Springs Golf Course in Kenosha, Wis., recently won a new Toro Greensmaster TriFlex Hybrid riding greens mower. The giveaway was part of Toro's "Master the Greens U.S. Tour" equipment demonstration series hosted at golf courses this summer.

"When I found out I won I was in total disbelief," Stanek said.

Dave Hassel, Kenosha County's supervisor of golf conditions, added, "We are just so pleased to have the opportunity to receive this mower. The machine will be a tremendous asset for us in the future."

Quotable

"As natural disasters ravaged the country this summer, maintenance crews labored countless hours to get our courses back to playable. And most (superintendents) have done it with the tighter budgets brought on by a slumping economy. They deserve patience, time and our appreciation."

— *Golf Digest Editor-in-Chief Jerry Tarde in November's 'birdie of the month'*

PHOTO COURTESY: THE TORO COMPANY

[PEOPLE] in the news

Chuck Borman (1), CAE, will receive the Distinguished Service Award from the Carolinas GCSA at this month's Carolinas conference and trade show in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Borman is the former executive director of the Carolinas GCSA, and still works for the association as a consultant.

It was on Borman's watch that the Carolinas association experienced significant growth in membership, services and revenues. During his administration the Carolinas conference and show tripled in size; membership grew from 1,200 to 1,800; and the annual operating budget grew from \$400,000 to \$1.1 million.

"Chuck Borman's impact on the golf course superintendent profession in the Carolinas cannot be overstated," says Carolinas GCSA president John Davis of

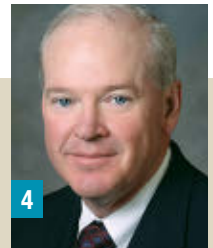
Secession Golf Club. "He took this association from a very solid base to being a force in golf in our region and a champion of the interests of every single one of our members. Superintendents for many years to come will benefit from his legacy."

Longtime superintendent **Jerry Kershasky** (2) has joined Reinders, Inc. to help serve the Chicago market. He will be a territory manager in the Soft Goods Business Group responsible for sales and product support.

For the past 37 years, Jerry has been the superintendent at Westmoor Country Club in Brookfield, Wis. He is a past director of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, where he directed the efforts of the Turf Diagnostics Lab and raised funds for research.

Reinders, Inc. is the Midwest's largest full service distributor of products to the commercial green industry.

Jeff Higgins, Ph.D. (3), has joined the staff of Harrell's, manufacturer and supplier of performance-based turf and ornamental products, as Vice President of Business Development. He will lead Harrell's efforts in customer education and



manage national accounts for golf, turf and landscape markets.

Higgins joins Harrell's from ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance, where he served as the Director of Agronomy and was responsible for agronomics and maintenance of over 70 golf courses throughout the United States as well as all vendor relationships.

Marc Dufour (4) has been named president and CEO of Club Car, an Ingersoll Rand brand. Dufour will have overall responsibility for the operational performance and strategic direction of the golf car and utility vehicle manufacturer. Dufour is Club Car's fifth president in the company's 53-year history. He succeeds Gary Michel, who recently was named president of Ingersoll Rand's Residential Solutions Sector.

Lastly, GCSAA named **Richard Konzem**, who has more than 30 years of managerial experience, primarily in intercollegiate athletics, as chief operating officer. He started for the association last month.



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Another Veteran's Day passes that I can't call my dad. Two years ago my dad passed away from brain cancer. It took him quickly — six weeks from diagnosis to death.

He always expected me to call him on Veteran's Day. I loved talking to my dad but I never really understood why I needed to call him on Veteran's Day. My dad served in both the Air Force and the Air National Guard, retiring after 20 years of service, but he never was shot at or took part in any conflicts overseas. Isn't that what made someone a "veteran"?

But last winter I had my eyes opened as to why he deserved that call every Veteran's Day.

My sister and mom asked me to be at Mom's house at a certain time over the weekend. We usually keep a pretty loose schedule in the family, but this time they stressed to me that I had to be at the house no later than 2 p.m.

So, with my wife and then 3-year-old in tow, I made the three-hour drive from Lawrence, Kan., to Wichita, Kan.

I was sure we were there on time. But surprisingly, no one was home. So we let ourselves in and got comfortable.

About ten minutes later the doorbell rang. It was one of my dad's old employees, a gentleman by the name of Korey. I hadn't seen Korey since Dad's funeral, but I knew Korey well. He and my dad were close, and I also got to know Korey and his family pretty well over the years. Korey even helped get me a job in a bookstore back when I was in college.

At the time it didn't occur to me that the reason I needed to be home at 2 p.m. was because Korey wanted to meet with me.

Korey said he wanted to talk to me about my dad, so we sat down. Korey started getting emotional as he started to explain the influence my dad had on his military career. Korey stressed that it was my dad who mentored him throughout his career, and if it weren't for my dad, he probably wouldn't have continued his service to the country, which included two tours in Afghanistan.

And then Korey pulled out a medal he was

A Medal for Boyd

BY SETH JONES



THE MEDAL WAS AWARDED FOR PROTECTING OUR FREEDOMS AFTER 9/11. BUT THIS PARTICULAR MEDAL WAS ALSO MEANT TO BE GIVEN AWAY TO YOUR MENTOR.

awarded. It was called the "Hometown Heroes" medal and it was presented to him for his service in protecting our freedoms after the 9/11 attacks. The inscription reads a quote from George W. Bush, given on Oct. 7th, 2001: "We will not waver, we will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail."

Korey explained to me that this particular medal is meant to be given away to your mentor.

We were all teary-eyed as Korey told me that this medal was meant for "B.J." as he called him, my father, Boyd. But since Dad had passed, he wanted me to have it, and to know how important my dad was to his, and many other military careers.

It was perhaps my highlight of 2010. How often, after all, is a wimpy journalist presented a military medal in honor of his dad?

I wish I could have called my dad on this Veteran's Day and told him that I get it — I get why every single person who dons a military uniform for this nation is special. But fate and that horrible thing called cancer won't allow it.

But another once-in-a-lifetime opportunity arose recently, and I capitalized on the moment to honor my dad in the best way I know how. When my wife and I welcomed the birth of our second child last month — he was born on Oct. 5th and weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces and was 21 inches long — we proudly named him after the greatest man I ever knew. And someday I'll be able to give my son Boyd that medal, tell him about Korey, and tell him all about his proud namesake.

I'll get back to turf next month, I promise. But I did want to take this moment to tell this story, and also to thank all the *Golfdom* readers who have proudly served our great nation.

I can't call Dad anymore, but I'll tell you what I would've told him: Thank you.

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The New Normal

BY JOEL JACKSON



*All resources maximize.
Now with less — do more.
Quoth my conscience, “Evermore.”*

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, CHANGE IS NORMAL. IT HAPPENS ALL AROUND US. JUST LOOK AT THE ADVANCES IN GOLF MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGY AND TURF MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS.

The new normal' is an expression coined by financial and political wonks to describe the uncertain nature of our current fiscal status quo. Essentially what's certain is uncertainty. But then that's nothing new for golf course superintendents, and frankly general managers and golf pros as well. When it comes to golf, sometimes there is no such thing as normal.

Naturally I'm biased, but I think superintendents are the greatest magicians or wizards of them all. Besides juggling budgets and personalities of an ever-rotating series of committee chairmen, superintendents have to react, respond and sometimes just plain rebuild from Mother Nature's rampages. This past summer is a perfect example of misery piled on top of monetary malaise.

Superintendents nip and tuck at programs and practices to save bucks here and there to adapt to shrinking revenues. Getting club members to understand zero-based budgets and help set priorities for achieving acceptable playing conditions remains a challenge. The new normal of lowered expectations unfortunately is not yet a reality for many who cling to the old ways.

Sometime last year in a semi-conscious "creative mood" I jotted down a poem, with apologies to Edgar Allen Poe and his classic "The Raven." In this little ditty I tried to capture the mood we seem to be going through.

And so, I give you: "The Raving!"

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

*Budget gets another tweak.
Mowing fairways twice per week.
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 GM, "Nevermore."*

To succeed, must improvise,

So for evermore, just what is the new normal for a golf course? The new normal has to be change. Play it Forward, Get Golf Ready, Play Golf America, First Tee, Wee Links and on and on. Club members, general managers, golf professionals and superintendents will have to be committed team members as never before. There is no single answer for a particular course because of the wide variety of golf course operations in our wonderful and sometimes wacky industry.

When you think about it, change is normal. It happens all around us. Just look at the advances in golf maintenance equipment technology and turf management products and how they have changed our turf management programs. The changes in society and the time-crunch paradigm have altered how people manage their free time and golf is feeling the pinch.

While we are building up interest in golf and revenues, every club and every golfer needs to be involved in making a contribution to turfgrass research. For decades it was "normal" for the allied turfgrass associations to raise funding. Meanwhile, the true end-users, the golfers usually just sat back in judgment of the playing conditions.

In today's world of increasing focus on green technologies and environmental regulations, the golf industry must excel in being a model of sustainability to show its value and dedication to people, planet and profit. Golfers from super stars to rank amateurs must now show their love of the game by donating through line items in the club's budget, philanthropic donations or dedicated surcharges on golf rounds on a state or national "Golf Day" program. If everyone gave just a little it would really add up.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA.