



// AWARD GOES TO..

GCSAA AND GOLF DIGEST BESTOW ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

Steven Tierney, superintendent at Golfpark Nuolen in Wangen, Switzerland, and his course, are the big winners of the GCSAA/ Golf Digest 2012 Environmental Leader in Golf Awards.

According to the GCSAA, Tierney earned accolades for overseeing a water-farming project that “featured seven miles of drains to divert runoff into irrigation ponds.” Consequently, the course has saved \$20,000 in annual electricity costs.

Those in the United States who earned environmental honors include Matt Shaffer, superintendent at Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, Pa; John Anderes III of Queenstown Harbor (Md.); and Joshua Kelley of the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club in Orlando.

// GREAT GRANTS

WATSON FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED

The GCSAA has chosen three doctoral students as the newest recipients of its Watson Fellowship Program.

The \$5,000 post-graduate grants went to Diane Silcox of North Carolina State; James McCurdy of Auburn University; and Joshua Friell of the University of Minnesota. The fellowships are funded through a partnership between the Toro Co. and the EIFG.

// GOLFDOM WISDOM

It's OK if the course dog is your best friend. It's not OK if the course dog is your only friend.
#Golfdomwisdom

The Goosinator

BY BETH GERACI // Senior Editor

➔ Chris Habeger, assistant superintendent at Alvarado CC, Lawrence, Kan., was talking with coworkers about how hard it is to control geese at the club. Cosmically, 15 minutes later, Randy Claussen was driving through the neighborhood looking to demonstrate a goose control tool called the Goosinator, a remote-controlled device that chases off geese.

“I couldn’t believe he was in the neighborhood right after we were talking about our geese problem,” Habeger marveled.

Alvarado, a 36-hole facility, has six ponds. Habeger long has battled the influx of geese that often migrate from ponds to greens.

“Geese land on the pond next to the No. 3 green and come up and destroy it,” he said. “All it takes is a few little pieces of feces to interrupt a guest’s round of golf.”

Habeger said that after testing the Goosinator (www.goosinator.com) for just a few minutes, he was sold.

“I was really impressed that it got around so well on the ice, the water and the turf. To have one device work on different terrain, I can’t think of anything else outside an animal that could get around like that.”

Claussen said the Goosinator has gotten similar reviews from many courses. “Once you have it, you don’t have to clean up after geese anymore,” he said.

Habeger knows now is not the time for Alvarado to buy new equipment, but when that time comes, the Goosinator will be top of his list, he says.



PHOTO BY: SETH JONES

READER JOKE

AS TOLD BY **Damon Di Giorgio, Fieldstone GC, Wilmington, Del.**

Got a good golf joke? Send it to golfjokes@northcoastmedia.net. If we publish yours, we'll send you a \$50 gift card!

One day a golfer accidentally overturns his cart. Elizabeth, a very attractive former LPGA golfer who lived in a villa on the golf course, heard the noise. She called out, “Are you okay? What’s your name?” “It’s Jack, and I’m OK,” he replied. “Jack, forget your troubles. Come to my villa, rest a while, and I’ll help you get the cart up later.” “That’s mighty nice of you,” he answered, “but I don’t think my wife would like it.” “Oh, come on,” Elizabeth insisted. She was very pretty and persuasive. “Well, okay,” he finally agreed, and added, “but my wife won’t like it.” After a restorative brandy, and some driving and putting lessons, Jack thanked his host. “I feel a lot better now, but I know my wife is going to be really upset.” “Don’t be silly!” Elizabeth said. “She won’t know anything. By the way, where is she?” “Under the cart!”

Golfdom Gallery

WE CAME.
WE SAW.
WE TOOK PICTURES.

1 Built Ford tough The crew at Meadow Club in Fairfax, Calif., including superintendent Sean Tully with course dog Bode, pose for a photo with their 1951 Ford truck. But don't be fooled, we saw more BMWs in that maintenance parking lot than we've ever seen before!



2 Pump up the jam GCSAA Director of Environmental Programs Greg Lyman shows his audience at the Rain Bird Intelligent Use of Water Summit one crucial technique — how to raise the roof.



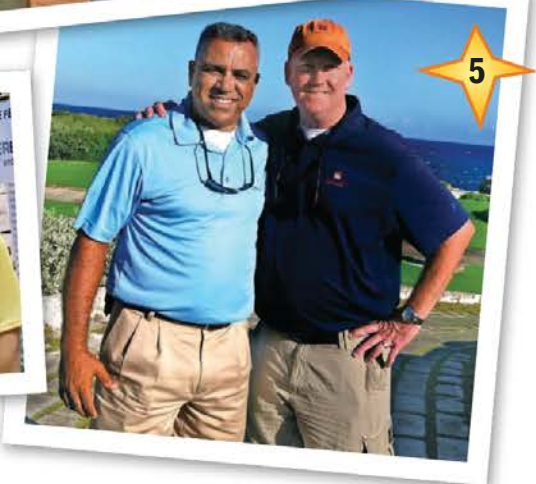
3 Fit to be tied When Michigan State turf professors discussed the dress code for the Intelligent Use of Water Summit, one of these seniors was absent. Can you pick him out? (It's OK, we heard he had the best GPA, so he can get away with it.)



4 We're in it together While at the Sports Turf Managers Association meeting in Daytona Beach, *Golfdom* EIC Seth Jones caught Russ Nicholson, agronomist for Pennington Seed, for a quick video interview. The topic of conversation? The Turfgrass Water Conservation Alliance. That's right, we want to take the power back!



5 SPF 0 *Golfdom* publisher Pat Roberts (R) looks all the more red next to the golden tan of Julio Diaz, superintendent at Puntacana Beach and Golf Club, Dominican Republic, as the two pose for a public service announcement on the benefits of sunscreen.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY: SETH JONES (1, 4)
ALSO: BETH GERACI (2, 3); SOME CADDIE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (5)

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My Second Office

BECAUSE THE COURSE IS YOUR FIRST

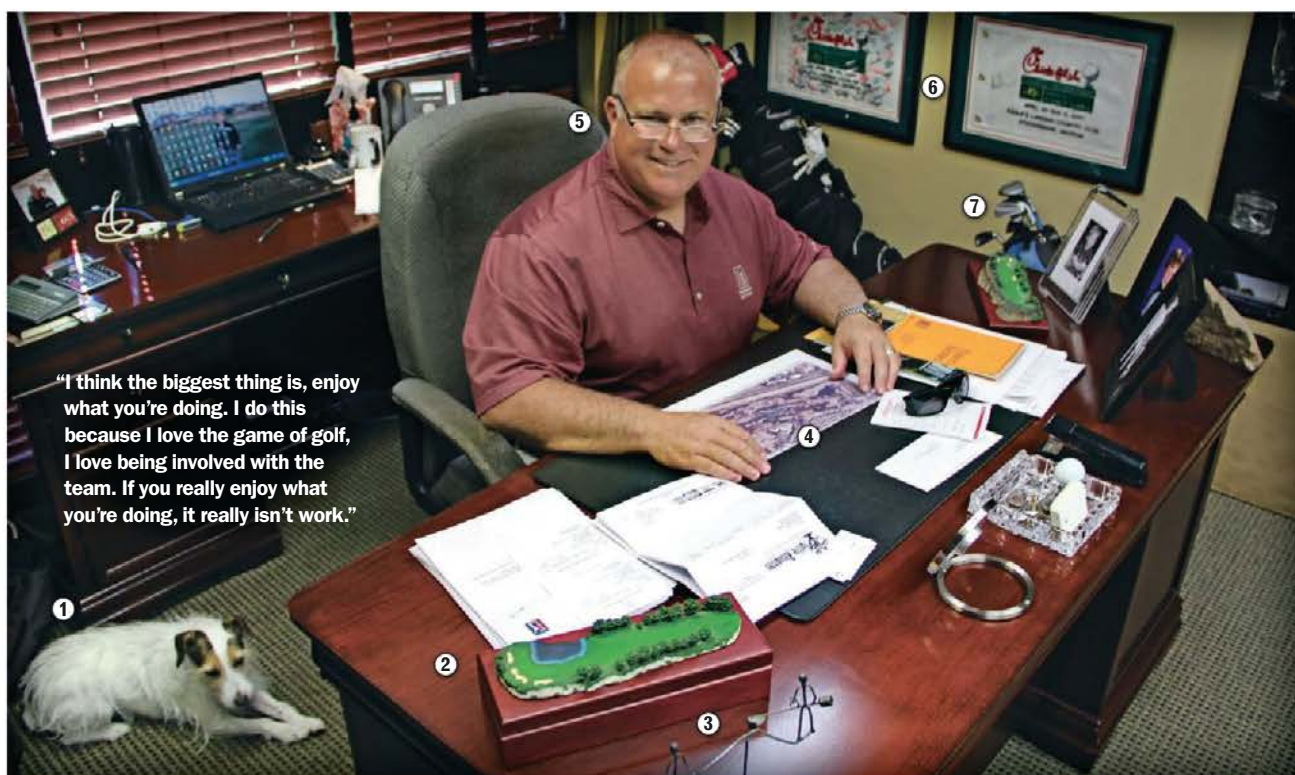
About our host

JEFF PLOTTS, superintendent at TPC Scottsdale, is eerily calm as he and his team prepare to host the Waste Management Phoenix Open this month. It's one of the most attended tournaments in the world, so one might think Plotts would be a bit frantic behind the scenes in his second office. Especially since when we toured his

office, the tournament was a mere two weeks away.

But Plotts is confident.

"I don't know that you're ever ready, but you're close, and we're close," he says of the tournament. "We have a good team here and we're clicking right along and should be right on schedule."



"I think the biggest thing is, enjoy what you're doing. I do this because I love the game of golf, I love being involved with the team. If you really enjoy what you're doing, it really isn't work."

1 DRIVING MISS DAISY That's Daisy, she's a Jack Russell terrier. The staff gave her to me at TPC Southwind. She's been with me now for almost 10 years and she's like my little sidekick — very loyal, just a really good golf course dog.

2 CHIPPING FROM THE DESK I love well-designed golf holes; the one on the box is Bay Hill, No. 18, and the other one is No. 13 at Torrey Pines. I like those golf holes, I love those facilities and those are two holes, from an operational standpoint, that remind me of what this facility is. We're kind of a little bit of both.

3 WALKING THE TIGHTROPE On one side it's a wire stickman holding a weed eater, on the other side it's another stickman pushing a lawn mower. My wife found it at some arts and crafts festival years ago and gave it to me. It's something I've had around for years in my office.

4 BIRD'S EYE We always do a little bit of renovation work each year. This year we'll do some lateral irrigation work. The plan is to shut the facility down in 2014 for a major renovation. We'll open back up a little later in the 2015 season... fitting our renovation in between the tournament.

5 SPECTACLES I wear them only to see! No, I wear contacts but I have to wear reading glasses, probably when looking at a plan. And my sunglasses — can't survive without sunglasses.

6 CHICK-FIL-A FLAGS In 2001 I was at Eagles' Landing and Eagles' Landing Country Club hosted the Chick-fil-A Charity Championship. In 2000 it became hosted by Nancy Lopez. Unfortunately it's no longer in existence, but I have a signed flag from every winner from every event that I've hosted. I like to display them — it's pride for me.

7 THE JUNIOR SET Those are very special; they are my son's, Cooper's. He loves golf — he's crazy about golf. My wife and myself had a little child and we never thought we were going to be blessed with one and we were blessed with one five years ago... and you know, we wouldn't trade him for anything in the world. He loves to come up and play, he just loves to hit balls off the practice tees.

BY KATY IBSEN // PHOTO BY SETH JONES

Proud of your second office? Email us a photo of you in it at sjones@northcoastmedia.net, and we may feature you and your office in an upcoming issue of *Golfdom*.



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“By his actions, my grandfather taught me to have an intense respect for the game of golf, the golf industry and my fellow superintendents.”

MARK WOODWARD, *Contributing Editor*

I'm one of the lucky ones

Most everything I learned about golf I learned from my grandfather, Jay. Well at least the important stuff. Jay started in the golf business in 1938. He was a golf course superintendent for many years, from the 1940s all the way through the late 1970s. I worked for my grandfather for six summers while I was going to school.

During those six seasons, I never once saw or heard him raise his voice, no matter how important or tough the situation was. Once, a fellow worker was mowing roughs, pulling a gang mower. He lost control, and the tractor slid into the lake. When I say “slid into the lake,” I mean it was completely submerged.

When my grandfather found out about it, he didn't get mad or raise his voice. The employee was so shocked at my grandfather's calm reaction he asked him, “Why aren't you yelling at me?” My grandfather calmly said, “Will yelling at you get the tractor out of the lake?” He instinctively

knew that the employee felt bad enough as it was and there was no sense in piling it on.

As an impressionable teenager, it was a turning point in how I viewed my grandfather. By his actions, without even knowing it, he taught me to have an intense respect for the game of golf, the golf industry and my fellow superintendents.

Respect for others seemed to come easily to him. It didn't matter if he was dealing with the club president, a club member or an entry-level employee — he made everyone feel important. He made me truly understand the meaning of integrity and honesty and doing the right thing.

He also inspired in me a strong work ethic. He taught me no matter what the setback, you can rise above it. He showed me firsthand the value of getting up early, working hard and then doing it again the next day — and the next.

Family was very important to my grandfather. He loved being around all of us. We celebrated many holidays at my grandparents' house when I was growing up, and many of my most cherished memories are from those occasions.

One of my biggest concerns about our society today is that we seem to have lost the close connection with family — a

connection wherein you made every effort to eat dinner together every night, regardless of what was happening in your life.

For the most part, dinner was at 6 p.m., no questions asked. You ate with the family, and you ate what was served, with no complaints. Today, meanwhile, we are constantly bombarded with things that somehow far too easily conflict with spending dedicated time with our families. It's a shame.

I was one of the lucky ones — I not only had a grandfather who was around and who lived a very honorable life, but I also had a father who lived by exactly the same tenants.

Telling you everything my dad taught me would take too long. Perhaps that's a story for another day.

For now I'll just say that I've been fortunate enough to have had two incredible mentors and heroes.

Yes, I learned everything about golf from my father and grandfather. But even more so, I learned everything about life from them.

The golf industry, too, is known for teaching some valuable lessons, and the lessons of the game run parallel to those we learn off the course. That's one of the cool things about golf.

As an industry we are blessed.

Mark Woodward is president of Mark Woodward and Associates, principal of DaMarCo Golf, CEO of MasterStep Golf Group and a contributing editor for *Golfdom*.

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“Palmer looked at the greens and casually said, ‘This is the way I always hoped they could be.’”

JOEL JACKSON, *Contributing Editor*

Moments to remember

We all have memories of good and bad days in the business, and when 2013 got under way, well, it put me in a nostalgic mood. So here’s a look back at some of my favorite memories on the job, in no particular order. I’m looking forward to adding to this list in 2013.

The day I made Bob Hope laugh. While working at Disney’s Lake Buena Vista Club, I met Mr. Hope, who just happened to be playing the course. As his group was readying their carts, he needed to return to the main level of the clubhouse. I gave him a ride in my cart, we exchanged pleasantries, then we parted ways.

Later in the day, I was riding with a crew member out on the course when we came across Hope and his group on #13. I had a badly cut golf ball in the dash compartment, so, as a joke, I scribbled “Bob’s Ball” on a piece of paper, attached it to a “smiley” ball and teed it up on the 14th tee. Then I ducked out of sight. When Hope got to the tee, we

heard him laugh and utter something like, “Would you look at that!”

Working with Arnold Palmer. If you were lucky enough to hear Peter Jacobsen’s keynote speech at the GIS last year, you got a humorous and heartfelt sense of the famed Palmer personality which, having worked with him for three years at the Isleworth G&CC near Orlando, I can attest to.

Back then, in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, 10 to 12 courses were on suicide missions to grow Penncross bentgrass in Florida, including Isleworth. I was Isleworth’s superintendent at the time, and I used to routinely check in with Palmer as he played the course.

One day, he looked at the greens and casually said, “This is the way I always hoped they could be.” Looking back, that moment is one of

the highlights of my tenure with “The King.”

(Of course, during the summers Palmer spent in Latrobe, Penn., the greens at Isleworth were maybe 85 percent to 90 percent good. Eventually, year-round expectations drove the renovation to bermudagrass — a much wiser choice for central Florida.)

One funny lowlight of my association with Palmer came when I was interviewing for that superintendent position. The interview was great. Palmer’s superintendent at the time, Jim Ellison, and I were good friends. And since Palmer and I had both been in the U. S. Coast Guard, we had a common link.

After handshakes and farewells out in the Bay Hill parking lot, however, I noticed something on the

sleeve of my brand new Hart, Schafner & Marx navy blazer — bought just for the occasion. There they were, four small words emblazoned on a fabric tag for all to see: “Jack Nicklaus — Golden Bear.” I was mortified.

I eventually went back to Disney, finished my 20-year hitch and got my gold watch. During that time, I was privileged to work on many Disney Classic PGA Tour events and with Tour officials John Bredle and Mark Russell, who were Disney golf operations supervisors with me before joining the Tour.

I’ll close with a wildlife story. One evening I got a call from the Lake Buena Vista pro shop about a leaking pipe under the bridge on No. 13. Sure enough, a compression coupling on the 10-inch pipe was loose.

As I finished the repairs in the dark, helped only by my car’s headlights, I stepped back to survey the repair. I looked up and discovered a curious bobcat cub sitting six feet from my head, watching me.

Ask me again why I love this business!

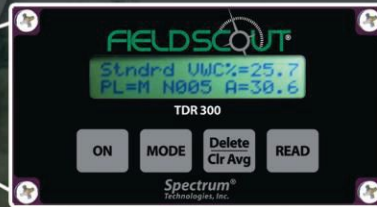
Thanks for sharing your stories and thanks for giving me so many wonderful memories so far in my career. I’m looking forward to many more wonderful times sure to come in the new year.

Joel Jackson, CGCS-RET., is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.



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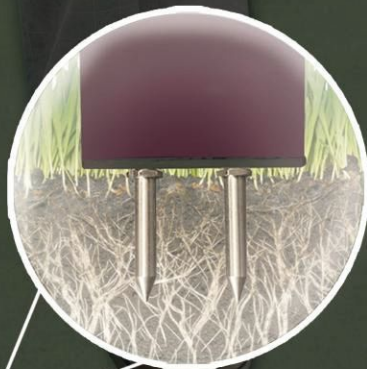
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“When it comes down to it, we’re grass growers, not tree cutters.

MATT NEFF, *assistant superintendent, Wedgewood G&CC, Powell, Ohio*

From great heights

Here we are in the middle of winter and those of us in the northern part of the country are in the midst of our usual winter work — equipment maintenance, reconditioning golf course accessories, snow removal and probably a lot of other projects that you either couldn’t or didn’t get done during the season. There’s a good chance that high on your list of priorities this winter is some type of tree pruning or removal. While there’s no question that this is a necessary and often beneficial task from both a golfer safety and agronomic standpoint, it can also be extremely dangerous.

From 2003 to 2011, The United States Department of Labor reported a total of 575 tree care worker fatalities. Eighty-two of them occurred in 2011 alone. The 2011 total exceeds the number of fatalities in both commercial fishing and logging, which are commonly known as two of the most dangerous occupations in the world.

The vast majority of tree care industry fatalities were the result of falls or “contact with objects and equipment,” such as saws, chippers and falling trees and limbs. According to The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), the fatality rate among tree

care professionals is approximately 40 per 100,000 workers, making it one of the most dangerous professions in the United States.

These statistics are based on incidents that occurred in the arboriculture industry to people who work in trees regularly and have more exposure to the dangers associated with that work. It’s fair to assume that they also have more experience and training than most of us do, yet there are still a staggering number of injuries and deaths every year.

When it comes to tree work, the danger is everywhere — falling trees, flying debris, chain saws, chippers,

you name it. There are a hundred ways to get hurt. You’re standing at the base of what could possibly be a several-ton slab of wood with a chain saw running at a few thousand RPMs. It doesn’t get much more dangerous, especially in our line of work.

And once the tree is on the ground, the danger isn’t past. All it takes is one cut on a weight-bearing branch or a branch under tension to cause the tree to shift suddenly or the saw to kick back. Training, experience and safety are absolutely imperative to minimize risk when dealing with something that can be as unpredictable as tree work.

Just as dangerous as inexperience is overconfidence. You may have dropped hundreds of trees over the years, but all it takes is one mistake to become a statistic. You may have a particular drop all figured out. You know without a doubt exactly which way the tree will fall, you have a clear landing area free of obstructions and people, you’ve checked for overhead obstacles, and your escape route is planned.

But maybe you overlooked the signs of rot or insect damage in the trunk in an otherwise normal appearing tree that will cause the tree to fall uncontrollably.

Anyone who has done tree work knows not to take anything for granted, but it certainly bears repeating as even a momentary lapse of attention can have serious or even fatal consequences.

People in our business are “do-ers.” That’s an admirable quality. However, it’s important to know where to draw the line when it comes to tree pruning or removal.

When it comes down to it, we’re grass growers, not tree cutters. While there is tree work that we can safely handle, there also are situations that exceed our expertise.

If you don’t feel comfortable with a certain situation, go with your gut. Is saving your ego by not asking for help from a more experienced coworker or professional arborist really worth the risk?

Matt Neff is assistant superintendent at Wedgewood G&CC in Powell, Ohio, and *Golfdom*’s newest columnist.