

The Florida Green

Fall 2008



The Florida Green

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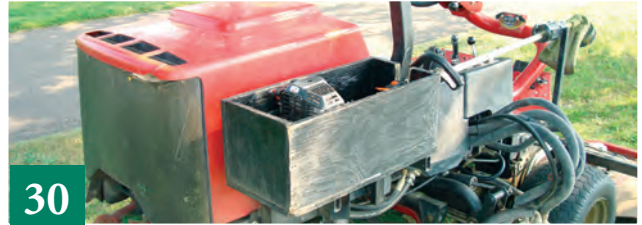
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As I write this message, Hurricanes Fay and Hanna have dumped rain all

over the state. I hope most of us got by with much-needed rainfall and not a lot of damage. We have made it halfway through another hurricane season thus far without any major storms hitting Florida. With our summer beach-vacation season up here in the Panhandle winding down and your fall golf season preparations under way, I hope Ike doesn't spoil that record.

With the year ending in exciting fashion with the Presidential election, government relations seems to be front and center with our association. As I go through hundreds of e-mails, the subjects are not that mole crickets are bad, or this disease is taking over, or this new mower is the way to go. It seems like year-round water restrictions on residents are getting tighter and we could experience some backlash on golf-course uses. The City of Sanibel is taking a second look at its fertilizer ordinance with respect to golf courses instead of the original mandate to just follow the new Golf BMPs for nutrient management. With restrictions on residents applying nitrogen or phosphorus during the rainy/growing season, what may be in store for golf courses?

Our executive director, Joel Jackson, tries to stay on top of these issues around the state. What we need, though, is for everybody to do his part locally. We all need to get more involved — including me. I see reports on meetings or letters being sent and it always seems to be the same names and faces that are carrying the load for all of us.

When grass-roots letter-writing efforts are called for, we try to provide talking points and templates so all you have to do is change the name and send it or email it. As far as attending commission meetings, hearings and forums, You do not have to go and argue with anyone; just being there means something. It's OK to go on the record with some facts. Trust me the environmental groups are usually there in herds with their emotional viewpoints, factual or not.

This is a challenge that goes out to everyone, including the guys out in the far west Panhandle. We might not have the problems that South Florida is facing with these issues right now, but trust me, they will be here before we know it. Get involved. This November is a good time to start. It is an election year. There are approximately 72,000

golf employees in the state. Make time for yourself and encourage your employees to vote. It will make a difference.

There are a couple of other items on our fall agenda:

First, the Fund Raising Committee with Tim Hiers, CGCS as chairman, is getting ready to roll out a pilot program of voluntary contributions to provide a stable, renewable funding source for our turf research projects. All golf courses will be able to opt in; more details will follow after the experimental trial period ends with about a dozen courses to check out the full process. The General Managers Association, our association, the FTGA and several industry partners are all on board with the idea. Stay tuned.

The second item is some changes to *The Florida Green* magazine. The fold-out cover has gone away as you can tell from this issue, and we are working on changing how we mail the magazine in the future..

With rising costs and economic pressure on our advertisers, these changes do not materially affect the magazine, but do lower costs to produce and distribute the publication.

One final note: last year was the first year I played in the GCSAA golf championships and I highly recommend it if you ever get the chance. You don't have to play like Seth Strickland in order to enjoy yourself. It gives you a chance to really network with people that you might never meet at the show. Try something new this year. The courses this year are in the Gulf Shores, Ala., area and the time to sign up is now.

I hope to see you all in New Orleans.



Shane Bass, CGCS
President

The Critics Have Spoken.

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Newly elected Florida GCSA officers, from left: Secretary/Treasurer Gary Myers CGCS, Walt Disney World, Central Florida GCSA; Immediate Past President Matt Taylor CGCS, Royal Poinciana GC, Everglades GCSA; President Shane Bass CGCS, St. James Bay GC, Seven Rivers GCSA formerly Coastal Plains GCSA; and Vice President Bill Kistler (A), Tampa Palms G&CC, West Coast GCSA. Photo by Joel Jackson



The 2008-09 directors and their chapters includes, from left: Steve Pearson CGCS, Palm Beach; Kevin Sunderman (A), West Coast; Rip Phillips (A), North Florida; Tom Barnett (A), Ridge; Wayne Kappauf CGCS, Everglades; Kelly Cragin (A), South Florida, Mark Kann (A), Seven Rivers and Roy MacDonald (A), Treasure Coast. Not pictured: Nancy Miller (A), Calusa and Bob Wagner (A), Suncoast



From left: Capt. Bob Jacks, John Spiwak, Matt Schad, AJ White, Tim Whitaker, and Bill Rayside on the "Teri Ann" took the heaviest dolphin in the PBGCSA Fishing Tournament.

Summer Isn't Slow Season – It's GO Season

Golf rounds may be slow during the dog days, but summer projects are on GO at many courses as play traditionally slows down.

FGCSA activity also slows, except for The Palm Beach Futures of Golf and Fishing Tournament in June and Central Florida Crowfoot Open in August, two large fundraising and networking events.

In Palm Beach, the Future of Golf returned to Steve



Winning the Palm Beach Fishing Tournament Top Boat and Heaviest Kingfish prizes was the "One & Done" with, from left, Mike Robertson, Brian Sanders, Jimmy Lane, Captain Mike Carver, Jason Maret and David Tandy.



Crowfoot Committee Chairman and Host Tom Alex, left, roasted and toasted the 2008 Larry Kamphaus Award winner Stuart Leventhal, CGCS as Vilma Kamphaus joins in the presentation in August. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Winners of the Palm Beach Future of Golf Tournament at The Falls CC were James Ferber, Jeff Egoal, Frank McKee and Paul Crespo with a net score of 57.

Pearson at The Falls CC after a one-year hiatus for renovation.

Meanwhile, Admiral Ed Miller and Commodore Paul Crawford reported a great haul for the angling fleet that set sail from the Blowing Rocks Marina in Jupiter.

Monthly chapter meetings continued through the summer with annual meetings and election of local chapter officers in July.

Grand Cypress Resort Conference Center in Orlando was the site of the FGCSA summer and annual board meetings, including the election of officers, Aug. 8.

The 32nd Central Florida Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot Open golf tournament took place on the Grand Cypress New Course the next day, followed by the Awards Reception. Crowfoot Chairman Tom Alex (aka Don Rickles) emceed the reception and paid tribute to tournament namesake, the late Larry Kamphaus and his work, association and family values. Then Alex proceeded to roast and toast this year's award winner, Stuart Leventhal, CGCS from the Interlachen Country Club.



SFGCSA President Ted Hile, left, and Immediate Past President Jason Bagwell, right, present a \$25,000 donation from the proceeds of the 2008 South Florida Turf Expo to John Rowland and Dr. George Snyder from UF/IFAS for the Ft. Lauderdale REC.



Living up to their annual tradition of donating \$3,000 each to the FGCSA and FTGA turf research funds, GASH reps Richard Coyle, left, and Dale Mitchell delivered the FGCSA check to President Shane Bass CGCS at the summer board meeting at Grand Cypress in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson.

RICK TATUM

BENEFIT TOURNAMENT



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2008 CROWFOOT OPEN

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Superintendent Net: 1. Tom Alex, 2. Rafael Villegeas, 3. Joe Pantaleo and 4. Gary Newcomb

Vendor Gross: 1. John Swaner, 2. Jayce Rammage, 3. Billy Browning and 4. Billy Griffith

Vendor Net Individual: 1. Chris Leahy, 2. Brad Reano, 3. Richard Coyle and 4. Chuck Garrett

TWO-MAN SCRAMBLE
Flight A: 1. Gary Dorsch and



Steve Bernard won the Crowfoot Open. Photo by Joel Jackson.

John Gamble; 2. Kevin Czerkies and Nicholas Czerkies

Flight B: 1. Don McCommon and Todd Walsworth; 2. Carl Benedict and Jim Kernohan.

Steve Bernard of the Adios Golf Club won the individual tournament with a score of 70. Bernard will join Seth Strickland, winner of the Poa Annuu Classic, on the FGCSA team to compete in the GCSAA National

Golf Championship in Gulf Shores, Ala. in February.

Fall began with the FTGA Conference and Show Sept. 16-19 and many chapters held no meetings that month so that superintendents could reserve "away" time to attend



FGCSA Executive Director Joel Jackson (left) presented Past President Craig Weyandt with a bound copy of the issues of the Florida Green for his second term as president as he now leaves the board. Photo by Shane Bass.

the major education and trade-show event, held this year in Palm Beach Gardens at the PGA Resort and Spa.

Mark Black Gets President's Award

The Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association gave the President's Award to J. Mark Black, CGCS July 10. He received the award at the chapter's annual meeting at Kensington G&CC. Black has been a superintendent in Collier County for more than 24 years. Currently at Quail West G&CC, Black began his career as an assistant to Dan Hall Jr. at Imperial GC in Naples.

A Lake City Community College graduate, Black landed his first superintendent's position as director of golf course operations for the Bonita Bay Group. He has said for more than 20 years that

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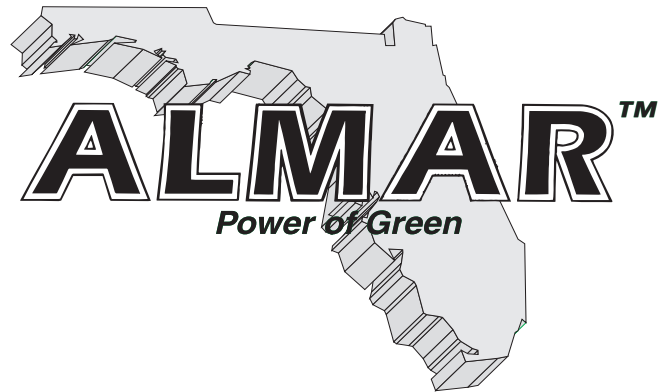
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Bill Gamble of Wesco Turf, a longtime friend who presented the President's Award to Black, praised the commitment and love he has shown for his family. His mother and wife, Sue, attended the award ceremony.

the key to his success was providing his members a course that was "tournament ready" every day. Quail West has hosted the PGA Champions Tour ACE Classic the past two years.

Equally impressive is the growing list of his assistants who have made their own marks on the industry. Among them are FGCSA Immediate Past President Matthew R. Taylor CGCS and the late Rick Tatum .

Active in all many superintendent organizations, Black is former EGCSA president and GCSAA committee member. He has spoken to groups on behalf of the USGA, GCSAA, The Club Managers Association and others.

Bill Gamble of Wesco

Turf, a longtime friend, presented the President's Award to Black.

-Wayne Kappauf



Shane Bass CGCS.

Shane Bass Wears Many Hats

Shane Bass, CGCS is wearing many hats these days.

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The wildflowers are in full bloom in the natural areas on the 16th hole. Photo by Shane Bass

Not only is he the new FGCSA president, he also happens to also be the superintendent and assistant general manager at the St. James Golf Club. You can also throw in “coach” if you count his son Bryce’s T-ball

and soccer teams.

Originally from Titusville, Bass now lives with his wife Karla and sons Bryce, 6 and Ethan, 2 just a block from his office on the St. James Bay property in Carrabelle.

Bass has a B.S. in psychol-

ogy from Florida State and a B.S. in ornamental horticulture from Florida A&M. He worked on the Killlearn CC in Tallahassee while getting his college degrees, but his original interest in the golf industry was sparked while working as a cart boy at the Royal Oaks CC in Titusville while in high school. Influenced by GM/pro Steve Hill, Bass originally went to FSU to become a general manager.

But while attending school he got a job on the Killlearn course to help prepare for an LPGA event. Working for superintendents Geri Bucheit and Floyd Robinson changed his mind and he went back to school at Florida A&M to get his horticulture degree.

Bass said of his mentors, “Floyd was old school and had been in the business for 30-plus years and Geri was a Texas A&M grad with lots of PGA and LPGA tournament experience. I had a great learning atmosphere of the old and new ways of doing things. I also owe a big debt of thanks to my parents who taught me never to quit on anything, no matter how difficult it might be.”

Bass has been at the St. James Bay Golf Club since 2001 and serves not only as the superintendent but also as the assistant general manager for the development. He says his biggest accomplishment to date was opening the golf course, getting his CGCS status and certifying

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Dawn breaks on the 1st hole at the St. James Bay G.C. Photo by Joel Jackson.

the course as an ACSP Silver Sanctuary all in the same year.

Since then Bass has been busy getting the whole St. James project certified as a FireWise Community, which involved cutting fire breaks around the property and conducting a

control-burn program on undeveloped lots and natural area on the course.

Bass hopes to get Bryce's school into the Audubon Sanctuary program now that the FireWise project is established. For his own relaxation he enjoys fishing, surfing and golf.

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TS Fay Dumps Lots of Water

Tropical Storm Fay dominated Florida's weather and TV coverage for more than a week in late August. The GCSAA even called to remind everyone that they stood ready to offer financial assistance to any members suffering hardships from the storm.

Darren Davis shared a photo, reporting that his Olde Florida GC received 12-14 inches of rainfall, which caused some flooding. Davis also shared a video of crew members hosing silt and debris off fairways.

A few reports came from east Central Florida where Fay stalled for a day or so, dumping 24-33 inches of rain in Brevard County:

VIERA EAST GC

Yes we were flooded; we took on just under 20 inches over here at Viera East GC. I had my guys work all Friday, Saturday and Sunday (Aug. 22-24) to make up for lost time. We only had two trees down, a lot of debris, mostly just a bunch of rain. The storm stalled right over us, I was able to open the front nine yesterday (Aug. 26) at noon, and the back will not be open till probably first of next week (Labor Day). I still have Three cart paths holding 4-8 inches of water on them. I also have about 100 pictures of the storm from start to finish. Some really good ideas for future plans down the road.

Scott Mosher,
Superintendent



Is this a water hazard or a bunker at the Olde Florida GC? Thanks to Tropical Storm Fay it's hard to tell. Photo by Darren Davis

MANATEE COVE GC

My course flooded. I'm at Manatee Cove GC on Patrick AFB. We had 26 inches of rain. We were closed from Tuesday, Aug. 19 through today, Aug. 27. We are re-opening tomorrow.

Kevin Czerkies, CGCS

There was also a report that the DeBary G.C. had half of a green washed away. The Deltona – DeBary area of western Volusia County still has lots of standing flood water in residential areas as well.



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PALM BEACH CHAPTER



Keeping The Promise

The Ritz Carlton Golf Club, Orlando

Located less than two miles east of Orlando's bustling International Drive and the Orange County Convention Center, The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club offers visitors and locals a round of golf on a Greg Norman-designed course that thoughtfully complements the natural landscape.

The gently rolling fairways wind through woods and wetlands that border Shingle Creek, which flows south from West Orlando to Lake Tohopekaliga, Lake Toho for short. The 16 lakes on the course capture storm

The par-3, 216-yard 17th hole on the Ritz-Carlton Golf Course at Grande Lakes, Orlando. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

runoff, protecting the ecology of the area. Other than a couple of holes near Central Florida Parkway to the north and John Young Parkway to the east, most of your golf round is spent on a virtual eco-tour of the natural surroundings.

Superintendent Andy Ragsdale has been on the course since construction and grow-in back in 2002. He worked his way up from assistant superintendent to superintendent in 2004, and he's enjoying every minute of it. On our tour of the course for this story, Ragsdale's enthusiasm for the layout, the wildlife, his golf maintenance team and the resort's attention to customer service was infectious.

"This course is designed perfectly for this property," he said, "with wide fairways and subtle movement in the greens. For group outings, golfers of all skill levels can have a great, enjoy-

able round which will challenge the low handicappers, but also won't beat up the average golfer. In the summer time, we also create forward family tees, so even young golfers can play and the whole family can enjoy the experience."

Several other features on the course speak to its uniqueness and playability. The Ritz-Carlton has large approaches and greens surrounds, about 14 acres' worth. TifSport is used everywhere except the putting surfaces, which are TifEagle. The approach and runoff areas are mowed to 1/4 inch and offer unique chip and pitch shots reminiscent of some of the U. S. Open set ups at Pinehurst No. 2.

Eight crushed coquina "waste bunkers" double as natural cart paths. The placement of these bunkers/paths offer softer, playable landing areas for golf shots as opposed to paved surfaces

that can bounce balls into the bordering woods and wetlands. Coquina paths are quite common in the Naples/Ft. Myers area, but not as prevalent on Central Florida courses.

Five sets of tees on each hole total six acres of teeing ground. This gives the staff plenty of room to move the tee blocks around to avoid severe wear and tear. Sometimes group golf outings must fit into tight time schedules. The generous teeing areas give the staff the ability to set up the course appropriately for the needs and abilities of the participants and prevailing weather conditions.

Creating a guest-friendly atmosphere is a central theme at the Grande Lakes Orlando Resort, which is home to both the Ritz-Carlton and J. W. Marriott hotels that overlook the course.

Ragsdale says that training in supe-



With the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the background on the 9th hole, golfers are challenged to reach the green on the number-2 handicap hole, a 453-yard, par 4. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



Every good golf course has a short-but-challenging par-4 hole. Manicured bunkers guard the 352-yard, 13th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

THE RITZ-CARLTON GOLF CLUB, ORLANDO

Type: Resort and Public Play
Length: 18 holes; 7,122 yards; Par 72;
Slope/Rating: 139 / 73.9
Design/Construction: designed by Greg Norman; constructed by Southeastern Golf; opened 2003
Management: Resort Vice President Steve Contos; General Manager Mark



Keeping the customer service promise. The Ritz-Carlton Golf and Grounds Maintenance Team.

Ferland; Director of Golf Patrick Dill; Head Golf Professional Kirk Baker, and Golf Course Superintendent Andy Ragsdale.
Ongoing projects: Drainage improvements, cart path improvements and removal of scattered common bermudagrass patches.
Total resort acreage: 497. Total acreage of turf under maintenance: 116
Greens: TifEagle, 3.5 acres; HOC .125 - .135 in.; green speed goal 10; no overseeding
Tees, Approaches, Fairways and Roughs: TifSport, no overseeding; Tees 6.0 A, HOC .300 - .500 in.; Approaches 14 A, HOC .250-.350 in.; Fairways 40 A, HOC .400 - .650 in.; Roughs 40 A, HOC 2.5 in.
Bunkers: 66 type 37M sand plus 8 crushed coquina waste bunkers which also act as partial cart paths on certain holes. Golfers may ground clubs on waste bunkers.

Waterways: 16 lakes 104.4 A, maintained by Lake Masters
Irrigation systems: Reclaimed water: Flowtronex pump station for course. Hoover pump stations for resort grounds. Rainbird Cirrus System. 1,500 heads on course, 10,500 on resort grounds; fertigation system.
Water Management

and Conservation practices: Constant monitoring and maintenance of reclaimed water system and adjusting run times for efficient watering.

Staff: Total including superintendent – 33 budgeted 1,100 straight-time hours per week and 60 hours of overtime.

Key maintenance staff members: Assistant Sean O’Brien; Equipment Technicians Mauro Ramirez, Hector Reyes and Jair Sarria; Golf Course Supervisors/Pest Control Technicians Larry Wheat and Dave Schmidt; Irrigation Technicians Flaviano Chumbo and Angel Cruz; Administrative Assistant Karen Nimetz.

Communication: Weekly golf meeting, weekly hotel leadership meeting and daily meeting with grounds team. Not only do we go over daily maintenance assignments, we also review the resort’s 12 customer service values and the employee promise in the Ritz Credo.

rior customer service and employee job satisfaction are as important as job performance. “At our daily crew meetings,” he said, “not only do we go over maintenance assignments but we also review

principles of the Ritz Carlton Credo and Employee Promise to ensure that all of our ladies and gentlemen know what is expected and to make sure they are informed about all resort operations

and opportunities.” As Ragsdale discussed the resort’s attention to detail, I flashed back to my Disney days and the company’s emphasis on guest service and team building.



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SUPERINTENDENT FACTS



Ritz-Carlton's Director of Golf Pat Dill, left, and Superintendent Andy Ragsdale. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Andy Ragsdale, Class A Golf Course Superintendent

Originally from Tarpon Springs

Family: Wife Sylvia and 2-year old daughter Veronica

Education: A.S. Golf Operations, Lake City Community College, 1999

Employment: 2004-present, superintendent Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando; 2002-04 assistant superintendent Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando; 1999-02 assistant superintendent Fox Hollow GC, Trinity.

Professional Affiliations: GCSAA, Central Florida GCSA, and Florida Turfgrass Association.

Goals: 1) best possible course conditions for our guests every day; 2) best possible working conditions for the ladies and gentlemen on our grounds staff.

Advice to new superintendents: Take care of your team – be consistent, firm and have fun. Clearly communicate your expectations to your team. Attention to detail is the key to success. Communicate to the leaders above you. You can't teach what you don't know and you can't lead where you won't go.

Memorable moments: The birth of my daughter and my wedding day.

Hobbies & community involvement: Hiking, camping, playing any sport including paintball. My wife is a terrific children's pastor and I enjoy helping her in her ministry.



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Back on the golf course, guests can also reserve guided fly fishing trips on the lake at No. 9. Ragsdale said they are planning to add spincast fishing also.

I didn't get a chance to wet a line on the tour, but I did get a line on butterfly gardening and was inspired by what I learned to create a butterfly garden in my own back yard.

"We have several formal butterfly gardens on the property," Ragsdale said. "One is on the course near the 13th tee and the others are near the hotels so guests can easily have access to watch the butterflies. The key is to have plants that will attract butterflies to include not only nectar plants for the adults but also food source plants like pipe vine, milkweed vine, parsley and passion vine to name just few for the caterpillar stage. Placement of the plants is critical since the caterpillar plants will get chewed on and can look a little beat up, so they should be near the rear of the garden."

Ragsdale goes the extra mile so guests can fully appreciate the butterfly circle of life. After the adults have laid their eggs and the caterpillars



Tee shots on the par-3, 8th hole must carry over a pristine wetland teeming with wildlife. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

have emerged, he will begin to scour the gardens to look for the chrysalis stage which leads to a new generation of adults. Ragsdale carefully transfers several of the chrysalises to a clear-sided shelter box and mounts them

along a strip of wood in the center of the box. The transparent case is located near a sidewalk so guests can stop and watch in fascination as the new adults emerge and let their wings dry in safety before they fly off to create a

FUN FACTS FROM ANDY RAGSDALE



Superintendent Andy Ragsdale points out some butterfly chrysalises that he has moved to a sheltered viewing box location so hotel guests can watch new butterflies emerge from their cocoons and dry their wings in safety. Photo by Joel Jackson.

1. **Vehicle:** GMC Yukon
2. **Last good movie I saw:** Bourne Ultimatum
3. **I stay home to watch:** UFC Pay per view
4. **Favorite meal:** Charlie's Steakhouse – 20 oz Porterhouse cut and Mom's house dolmades.
5. **Favorite performer:** Steven Tyler
6. **Prized possessions:** Family
7. **Personal Heroes:** Men & women in the U. S. Military
8. **Nobody knows that I:** Once kicked a 50-yard field goal
9. **If I could do it over:** I'd do it all the same
10. **I'm better than anyone when it comes to:** Keeping secrets
11. **I'd give anything to meet:** and spend two weeks on the road with Jesus.
12. **My fantasy is:** To travel the world with my family
13. **The one thing that I can't stand:** Cleaning the house
14. **If I could change one thing about myself:** Wish I liked cleaning the house
15. **Words that best describe me:** Kind, reliable, easy going
16. **My dream foursome would be:** Any of my brothers and/or nephews playing Pebble Beach
17. **My best fish story:** Once caught an 8 lb. largemouth bass at Fox Hollow, while on lunch break.
18. **My most amazing golf shot:** A 150-yard eagle on a par 4 during the Oldsmobile Scramble back in 1997.

new generation.

Ragsdale says there are usually 10-12 species of butterfly on the property at any given time. The butterfly gardens are also a great food source for a wide range of pollinator insects that are critical for survival of our plant life and crops. Several varieties of bees and small wasps could be seen foraging among the flowers.

Ragsdale's enthusiasm for the wildlife on the property isn't accidental. The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando is a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary that also supports a population of turkey, deer, bobcat, gopher tortoise and all the species of birds we have come to expect on Florida golf courses. The course became fully certified in December and, as reported in *Summer Florida Green*, the Marriott Corporation has pledged that all 34 of its golf properties will become certified cooperative sanctuaries. Two other Marriott properties in Orlando – Grande Pines and Grande Vista – already have reached certified status.

Every golf course has its built-in challenges and the Ritz Carlton is no exception. Soil can sometimes be a challenge if it doesn't drain well. Fortunately a sandy-loam soil profile here drains just fine. But once an open, grassy, pastureland, the site supported common bermudagrass growth, which Ragsdale says has become his number-one continuing management project.

The common bermuda itself is virtually invisible to golfers during the



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warmer seasons, but left unchecked it is an aggressive variety that spreads, so there is a progressive management plan in place annually to select and remove patches identified in the fairways.

The program has generally consisted of an alternating series of glyphosate and fertilizer applications to eradicate the rogue patches of unwanted common bermudagrass. Once a patch has been identified, the sod is cut out in a square pattern and fertilizer applied to encourage and stolons and rhizomes to grow. Any new emergent growth is then treated with glyphosate. The process is repeated three times to maximize control. After a few weeks, the area is resodded and monitored.

While the course drains well overall, there are a few places along some cart paths where settling has either cracked the path or prevented water from draining. The crew installs

“smile” drains and PVC catch basin boxes to remove any possible standing the water and then re-pours the concrete.

Finding time to do necessary routine cultural practices on a golf resort that is open 365 days a year takes creative planning and cooperation from everyone from convention sales staff to Director of Golf Patrick Dill to Ragsdale and the maintenance staff. Dill and Ragsdale try to ride the course together every Monday to discuss conditions, maintenance projects and upcoming golf outings. Communication on a more formal and larger scale takes place in weekly golf meetings and weekly hotel leadership meetings so everyone knows what going on and coming up.

Generally Ragsdale says he gets to aerify greens, tees and fairways three times a year; the approaches once a year and the roughs twice a year. Light greens topdressing is done approxi-

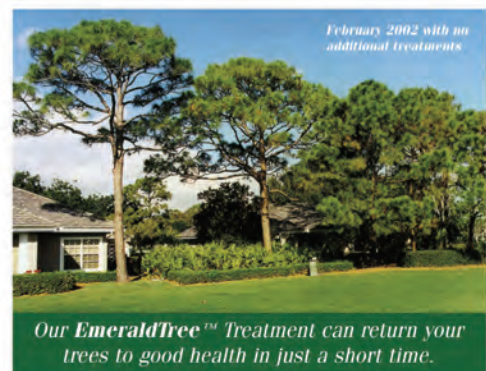
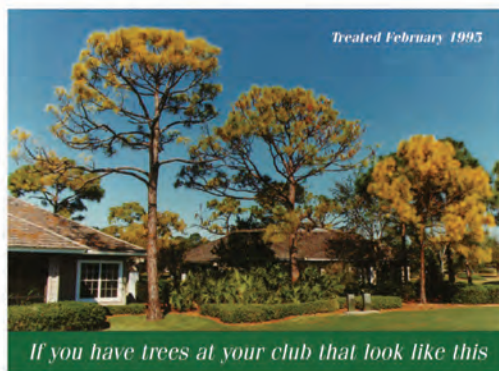
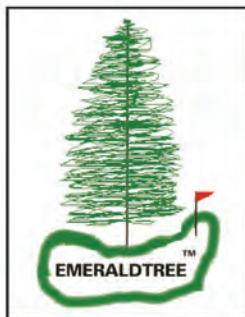
mately every two weeks. During the summer, when play slows down a little, the pro shop blocks a.m. or p.m. start times (depending on play) to provide access for topdressing.

Fertility on the TiffEagle greens is done primarily with weekly light liquid applications, which the turf takes up quickly. Maybe 2 to 3 pounds of granular nitrogen is applied annually. Tees, approaches, fairways and roughs receive a maximum of 8-10 pounds of nitrogen per year, which is on target for bermudagrass recommendations in the Central Florida zone.

Pest control is not a major issue. Known hot spots for mole cricket and grub activity are monitored and, if needed, spot-treated with Top Choice and Merit and Meridian. The rest of the course is scouted and monitored for pest activity as part of the integrated pest management plan.

(Text continues on page 24)

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The butterfly garden behind the 13th tee of the Ritz-Carlton GC has nectar plants for adults and food plants for the caterpillar stages.

Nature's Nursery

A photo essay by Joel Jackson



A Gold Rim Swallowtail caterpillar feeding on a food-source pipevine growing on a trellis in the butterfly garden.



An Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly with a wing span of 3– 4 inches was the main attraction this day.



The White Peacock butterfly ranges from Florida to southern Texas and feeds on spurge plants.



Butterfly gardens also provide nectar for a wide range of pollinators like this Mason Bee which ranges throughout North America.

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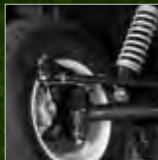
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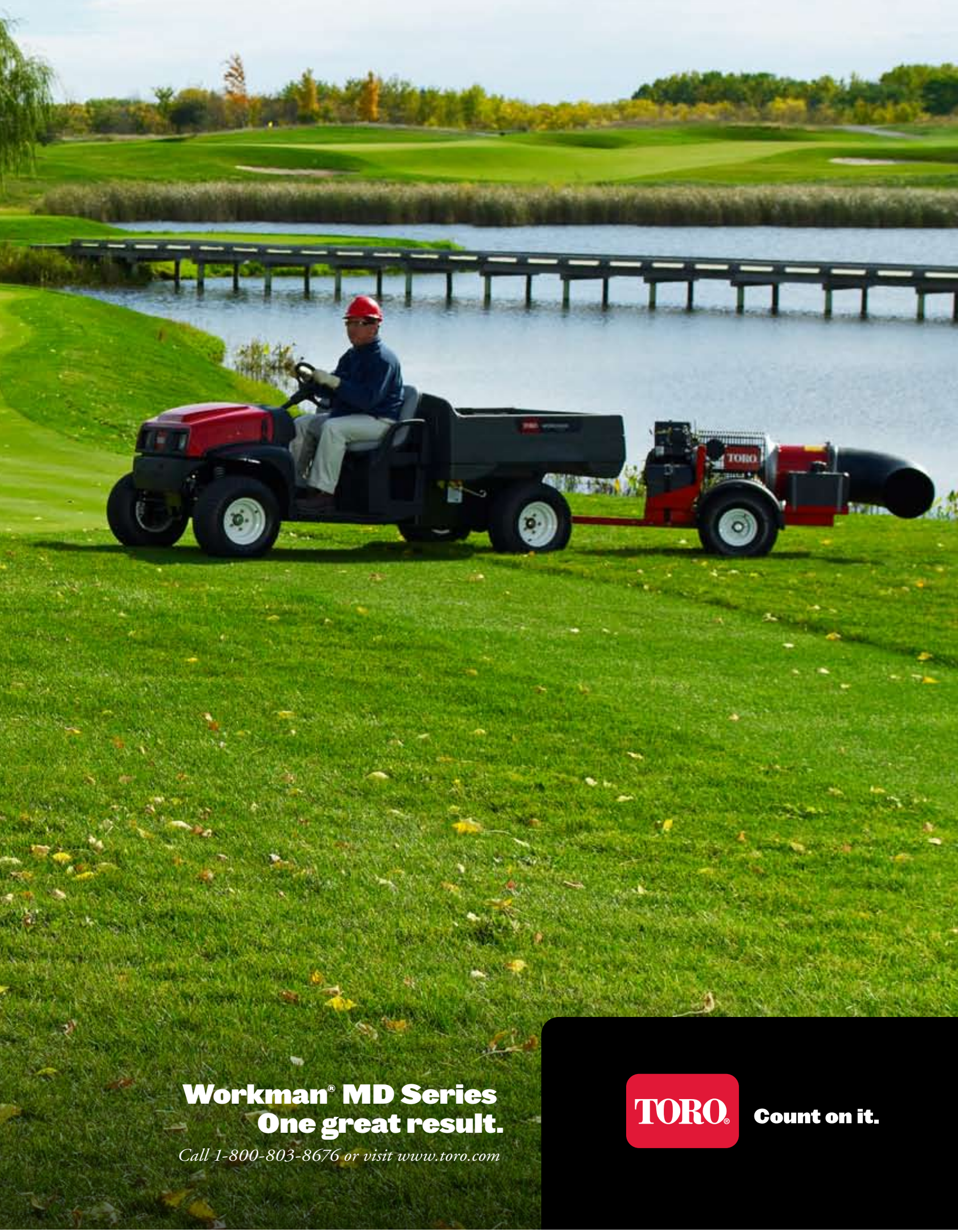
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A panoramic view up the par-5, third hole reveals one of the 16 lakes on the course, a pine and palmetto habitat and the J. W. Marriott Hotel, which shares the Grande Lakes property with the Ritz-Carlton. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

(Continued from Page 20)

The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club recently was able to switch to reclaimed water for its irrigation of the course and grounds, which is good for conservation of the area's fresh water supplies. Since reclaimed water isn't an infinite resource either, Ragsdale's irrigation technicians constantly inspect, monitor and adjust the operation of the 1500 sprinkler heads on the course and the 10,500 smaller heads around the resort grounds.

Throughout the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Ritz-Carlton property, Andy Ragsdale was well prepared to fill his current role as superintendent of this premier facility. He developed his interest in this profession while working summers with his father, Wayne Ragsdale, when he was a construction

superintendent for Wadsworth Golf Construction. Andy's keen interest in environmental stewardship may have been kindled when he helped build the Sanctuary GC on Sanibel Island. The Sanctuary exists in the John Ding Darling Federal Wildlife Preserve, proving once and for all that environmental stewardship is alive and well on golf courses.

Ragsdale went on graduate from the renowned Golf Operations program at Lake City Community College in 1999 with his A.S. degree and took a job as an assistant superintendent at the Fox Hollow Golf Club in Trinity, a small community just east of his hometown of Tarpon Springs. After three years at Fox Hollow, he found himself in Orlando helping to build and develop the course he now calls home.

If young Ragsdale is an example of the type of talent and leadership

potential in our industry, then our profession will be in good hands. His observations about work – taking care of your team, communicating clearly up and down the chain of command, and attention to detail – are sage advice for young and old alike. He summed up his personal observations with a phrase that already has found its way into FGCSA communications with members. It is “You can't teach what you don't know and you can't lead where you won't go.”

Learning and leadership are two qualities or skills that a successful superintendent needs to meet the economic and environmental demands and expectations facing today's golf industry. From what I observed, The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club is keeping its promise to do its very best for the guests, the employees and Mother Nature as well.



CONGRATULATIONS

to Andy Ragsdale
and his club for being
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Now What Do I Do?

Making a Smooth Transition From Assistant to Superintendent

Congratulations! You are now the golf course superintendent at XYZ Golf Club. Now what? Have you prepared yourself thoroughly for the new challenges ahead? Are you ready to be the one that staff and members (players) look to for answers to the numerous responsibilities of your new position? What if you do not have the answers – what then? Remember – for the many solutions required on a daily basis, the buck now stops with you!

The position of golf course superintendent is as interesting and varied as it is challenging. Obviously you have worked hard to gain the education and work experience, which has resulted in your being hired as a superintendent.

More than likely, however, rarely have you been the one having to make daily decisions regarding hiring, firing, purchasing, or long range planning, just to name a few of your new responsibilities.

Hopefully, those whom you have trained under have allowed you to participate to some degree in these areas so that you are not totally unprepared to make such decisions. But, how far have you gone to be as prepared as possible for your first head position?

Preparing for your first head position as thoroughly as possible is essential for future success. Jack DelRio, head coach for the Jacksonville Jaguars was called at 8 p.m. the evening prior to interviewing for the position the next morning without notice. He was considered a long shot for the position but he so impressed the owner of the team with his preparation that he was hired. How could he have prepared so thoroughly overnight? The answer – he didn't. He had been preparing for several years – developing a book

that outlines every aspect as to how he would operate as a head coach. DelRio covered everything from offensive and defensive philosophy, training camp routines, disciplinary rules, etc. His preparation was so complete that he outperformed other more highly regarded candidates.

The lesson of course: don't wait for the interview to prepare for the interview. The time to start planning comes when you make the final decision to become a golf course superintendent. From that time forward, a vision should be developing as to how you will manage the course and the staff that you inherit.

It's never too late, but you should have started your book on the day you made that decision. If you somehow got the top job without a plan, you need help. A lot of help. In a hurry.

ESTABLISH A NETWORK

One of the first things you should do is establish a network of peers who have been there, done that... and had it done to them. Their advice can help you save your course... and your head.

Your local chapter of the FGCSA provides you with a built-in network of superintendents who not only understand the job, but – particularly if you've moved to a new region – they know your golf course almost as well as your predecessor... and probably better than your new boss!

Furthermore, membership in the FGCSA includes membership in the GCSAA, the national organization with a wealth of resources to help you in every aspect of your job.

This advice may be old news. If you had a far-sighted boss when you became an assistant, you may have been encouraged to join as soon as you got the job. Maybe chapter dues were even built into your compensation package.

If that's not the policy at your new course, it's one you might consider... *after* you're firmly established in the job. Don't try to turn the horse before

you're easy in the saddle with a firm grip on the reins!

UTILIZE RESOURCES

You've already mastered the technical aspects of the job, have all the appropriate licenses and have learned how to supervise work crews. You know all about safety and scheduling but do you know how to *manage*?

Managing a large ecosystem with a diverse group of people, all subject to the whims of nature, upper management, members and regulators is a whole different ballgame.

Supervising is getting a crew through a punch list; managing is figuring out what should be on the punch list in light of scheduled activities, requirements of management, agronomic issues and the weather.

The GCSAA Web site has an amazing array of management resources for superintendents.

For instance, you can learn five strategies for making yourself heard. One example:

- **Talk daily with your management team**, especially the golf professional, regarding course conditions and schedules? Since the golf professional has more visibility with golfers, you want to be sure accurate information is communicated to them. Initiate the meetings with the golf professional, the general manager and the food and beverage manager to discuss mutual plans, areas of concerns and upcoming events. These interactions will help to create an effective working relationship.

Or 39 strategies for success, such as

- **Take responsibility for your own mistakes** and for those of your subordinates. Blaming others, however justifiable, makes you look small-minded and weak. Earn a reputation as a “fixer” of errors, someone who can snap back from setbacks and learn from mistakes.

There's a wealth of practical management advice waiting for you at www.gcsaa.org.

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The Central Florida TESTA organizes an annual shop tour so area mechanics can network and see different operations. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Make Opportunities Available for Vital Staff Training, Education

“You cannot teach what you do not know. You cannot go where you cannot lead.”

This was a comment by Andy Ragsdale during research for the cover story for this issue. I thought it fit perfectly with the Hands On theme.

While it is vital for superintendents to be up to date on regulations and turf management technology and equipment, it is clear that communication, business and leadership education are also key components for a successful career and operation.

Superintendents can attend GCSAA, FTGA, commercial and local chapter education programs, but what are courses doing to train the staff that is also critical for the success of the facility?”

Many courses send their assistants, technicians and/or foremen to the FTGA Regional Seminars in January. Several TESTA (Turf Equipment Service Technicians Association) chapters offer training sessions for certification in several maintenance areas.

Requiring pest control technicians to become certified Pest Control Operators is another way to improve their knowledge and environmental awareness.

Perhaps the best way a superintendent can improve performance and training of their assistants is to have

them join the local FGCSA chapters and give them the opportunity to attend several meetings each year.

Here are thoughts of some FGCSA members on job training, health and safety topics:

SEVEN RIVERS UF/IFAS PLANT SCIENCE CENTER

We have quarterly safety meetings throughout the year with the entire staff. Topics include pesticide safety, heat stress, equipment safety, etc. We do most of the training in-house but have brought in individuals from outside the organization such as Lee Bloomcamp and Chris Pappas.

We have had unusual training sessions for forklift operation, proper lifting, and passenger bus operation (*I bet no one else has that last one*).

The University’s policy on pesticides is more strict than the state’s policy. Almost everyone on the staff has a pesticide license and therefore needs opportunities to earn CEU’s. We provide them with several opportunities to achieve those CEU’s.

We usually send everyone to attend Chris Pappas’s First Response Chemical Spill Training Course. We send two people every year for the week-long class for Site Commander Training for Chemical Spills.

We have conducted Fumigation

Training sessions over the last couple of years for the entire University which serve as a review for most and an opportunity for others to take the test and receive their license or earn CEU’s.

The Marion County Jail supplies trustees daily to work on the site. They watch the Workers Protection Video every day on the bus bringing them from the jail. We get a few new people every day, so we need to make sure that they all see it.

My turf crew attends the FTGA seminars every January. When I had a mechanic, I sent him to equipment technician seminars that were held around the state. The University offers computer training classes, which many of our staff have attended. We keep very detailed records of applications and inventory, so having computer skills is a big plus for many of the employees.

Mark G. Kann
Coordinator of Research Programs

CENTRAL FLORIDA MARRIOTT WORLD CENTER

We have numerous associates going through a certification program at this time for high-reach, forklift, and pallet-jack operating. The associates are required to have their certification with them whenever they’re operating any of that equipment.

We’re also all attending a safety seminar on hearing, which includes a hearing exam.

John Kopack
Golf Course Superintendent

TREASURE COAST HOBE SOUND GOLF CLUB

We have monthly general safety videos, with tests at the end, sent by Risk Compliance. We very rarely have a workman’s comp claim so I would say the videos do their job. When I review the video program with insurance adjusters, they are usually pretty impressed. We have been doing this for five or six years.

We also have a checklist for operators for everything from fairway mowers to string trimmers. This checklist was taken directly from the

A Unique Workforce – and No Absenteeism

Editor's Note: When Mark mentioned the inmates who worked at the Plant Science Center and the mandatory Worker Protection videos that they have to watch, I asked him for more information about the program.

The inmates or "Trusties" that work at the UF/IFAS Plant Science Center come from the Marion County Jail. The sheriff believes that by working on the farm, they will learn some skills that they will be able to use when they get back out into the world. As of last word, six former trustees are now working on golf courses.

The farm gets about 25-30 inmates Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. I normally get 4-6 trustees each day to work in the turf area. I try to teach them to mow, but they need to be monitored rather closely at first. It's nice because I don't have to worry about them showing up, but I do have to worry about the quality of work that they do.

They get 8 days gain time off their sentence for each month that they work out here. They are all low-risk offenders, mostly DUI's, failure to pay child support, drug possession – no violent crimes. We do not pay to have the inmates come here, but we do send all of our leftover produce to the prison instead of trying to sell it and compete with local farmers that pay taxes and our salaries.

This past year, we sent over 350,000 pounds of potatoes to the prison. We will send other crops such as watermelon, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, cantaloupe, corn, eggplant, squash, etc. In addition, the sheriff has about 40 head of cattle that graze the prairie here. We can not use the area for experiments, so we let the cows graze there and they keep the weeds and grass down so that we do not have to mow it. We will bail hay for them and also feed them leftover field corn, soybeans, sorghum, and other silage crops.

Mark Kann, Coordinator of Research Programs

operators' manuals of the various pieces of equipment. We review important items from the manual and make the operators sign off on each piece of equipment.

I have two guys who have been with me for only three years. The rest of the staff have been here a minimum of six years, most of the them more than 10, so most of the crew know their jobs and safety requirements inside out.

My mechanic also goes to FTGA and GCSAA conferences when they're nearby and he is active in the local mechanic's association.

Roy MacDonald
Golf Course Superintendent

CALUSA MAPLE LEAF G&CC

We use a wide variety of training methods.

Internal Training: One-on-one training with manager or experienced crewmember, using the SVW videos and staff meetings. We also have

safety training with our personnel management group, daily supervision of operators including guidance and advice. We also have hired a supplier's technical rep to come in and teach a class.

External Training: Staff members attend UF/IFAS Extension classes and manufacturers' seminars. The club reimburses employees for tuition for college classes, and registrations for FTGA and GCSAA conferences and shows and also monthly Calusa GCSA meetings.

My current assistant is planning to retire next spring. I have an irrigation tech who is an excellent candidate for advancement and is interested in becoming a superintendent. We are paying his tuition for the turf program at Edison College so that he will be well-trained to assume the assistant's position in the spring.

Nancy Miller
Golf Course & Grounds
Superintendent

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SUPER TIP

Carry A String Trimmer in a Box

The subject of this issue's Super Tip, "String Trimmer in a Box" comes all the way from the state known as "the land of 10,000 lakes." This past summer I visited Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn. where Jim Nicol, CGCS shared with me a Super Tip that he and his staff have found very useful. Nicol, an industry veteran, has been the golf course superintendent at Hazeltine for 12 years.

The highly regarded Hazeltine was designed by Robert Trent Jones and modified by his son, Rees. Over the years Hazeltine has produced a resume of championships that is unmatched among clubs less than 50 years old: U.S. Women's Open (1966, 77), U.S. Open Championship (1970, 91), U.S. Senior Open (1983), U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship (1994), NCAA Division I Men's Golf Championship (1999),

PGA Championship (2002), and U.S. Amateur Championship (2006). In addition, the club will host the 91st PGA Championship in 2009 and the Ryder Cup Matches in 2016.

It goes without saying that course conditioning is incessantly on Nicol's mind and he is continually experimenting with techniques to increase productivity and provide an improved product. To mow the numerous bunker faces at Hazeltine, Nicol utilizes the Toro Groundsmaster 3500D (rotary Sidewinder). To avoid a potential accident, or damage to a bunker face Nicol feels more comfortable having his operators keep the Sidewinder cutting units about 12 inches away from the edge of the bunker.

This is where the string-trimmer-in-a-box idea comes into use. After



Close up of the PVC section and bracket that holds the string trimmer shaft. Photo

mowing the bunker face as instructed, the operator dismounts the Sidewinder and utilizes the string trimmer to finish trimming the bunker face. My supposition is the device might also be useful at golf courses that utilize trim mowers (either reel or rotary) to cut turfgrass on lake banks and around trees.

The box that houses the trimmer's power head is constructed from plywood and is affixed to the right side of the mower. The box measures approximately 20 by 12 by 10 inches deep. A channel was cut into the front of the box so the trimmer will remain level while in transport. The shaft near the trim-head rests in a sleeve made of a piece of 2-inch PVC pipe with a slot cut into it and affixed to a metal bracket on the front of the mower. The metal brackets and PVC sleeve used to secure the box were affixed to the mower utilizing existing bolts on the Sidewinder frame.

As "a picture is worth a thousand words," I think when you view the photographs of the string-trimmer-in-a-box you can envision slight modifications to both the dimensions and the mounting technique to fit your brand of mower and/or weedeater, but I thought the Super Tip was extremely innovative, creative and worth sharing.



Close up of the plywood box and bracket attachment housing the motor part of the string trimmer. Photo by Darren Davis.



At the famed Hazeltine Golf Club in Minnesota they mount string trimmers on the trim mowers for increased productivity and operator safety. Photo by Darren Davis.

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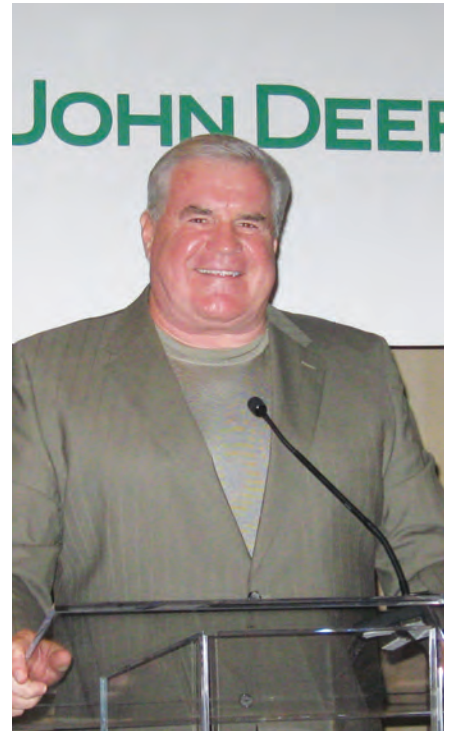
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FGCSA President Shane Bass, CGCS and Association Manager Jennifer Innes staff the FGCSA Booth at the FTGA Trade Show. Jennifer reported that lots of Golf BMP Manuals and Media Kits were handed out. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Bill Bergey, four-time All-Pro middle linebacker with the Cincinnati Bengals and Philadelphia Eagles was a humorous and entertaining keynote speaker at this year's FTGA Award Luncheon. Photo by Joel Jackson.

PGA National Resort Hosts 2008 FTGA Conference and Show

The location was great. The education was outstanding. The proximity of the lobby-lounge area made for a great meeting and networking location. The Toro Corn Boil was held at the rustic and secluded Bonnet Creek Hunting Club, but was only a few minutes from the resort and offered up tasty portions of open-pit-cooked wild boar, ham butt and roasted turkey. New FTGA President Todd Himmelberger said final numbers on attendance aren't in yet, but initial results appeared optimistic for the future.

The golf course was in great condition and a real test from the tips. One of the host superintendents, Blair Kirby won the FTGA Golf Tournament and a spot on the FGCSA Team for the GC-SAA Golf Championship to be played in Gulf Shores, Ala. in February.

The FGCSA staff did its part with Association Manager Jennifer Innes helping out at the registration desk and manning the FGCSA booth in the Trade Show. Executive Director Joel Jackson



Golf Agronomics Supply and Handling continued its generous annual support for turf research by donating \$3,000 to the FTGA Research Foundation. From left: Dale Mitchell, Todd Himmelberger, FTGA President, and Wesley Mitchell. Photo courtesy of Leading Edge Communications.

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made a presentation on BMPs and Water Conservation in the Wednesday Golf Concurrent Session and served as moderator of the Thursday Golf Session.



Beljan, Himmelberger and Wreath of Grass.

Course Siting and Design section. Photo courtesy of Leading Edge Communications.

Golf Course Architect and FTGA Past President Jan Beljan was presented the 2008 FTGA Wreath of Grass award at the 56th Annual FTGA Conference and Show in Palm Beach Gardens. Beljan, with the Fazio Golf Design Group, served on the Golf BMP Manual Task Group in charge of the



Following the swearing in of the 2008-09 FTGA officers, Immediate Past President Darren Davis from the Olde Florida Golf Club passes the gavel to President Todd Himmelberger, sales representative for DuPont Professional Products. Photo by Joel Jackson.

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The public should know how we are regulated

By Matthew R. Taylor, CGCS

Many folks think golf courses use water, fertilizer and pesticides wantonly. The general public has no idea what kinds of rules, regulations and inspections that golf courses are subject to as a routine matter of conducting business.

Here is a summary of all the checks and balances and regulatory authorities that dictate how we operate our golf courses. We may be unique on some items at Royal Poinciana, but most are pretty much standard for any operation.

COLLIER COUNTY POLLUTION CONTROL

Because we sit on or near some of the well fields for the county, we must be inspected each year and be given a Certificate of Occupancy. Not many other golf courses in Collier County have this same requirement.

The county reviews our records on disposal of batteries, tire, oil, hydraulic fluids and any accumulated used fuel. They also review our fuel storage tanks and chemical mix-load buildings.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND COLLIER COUNTY

Our fuel tanks each year must be inspected and certified that they are in proper working order.

FDEP AND CITY OF NAPLES

The reclaimed irrigation water we receive from the city is regulated by both authorities. FDEP mandates where it can be stored to make sure it is not discharged off our property. The river that runs on the western border of the property is monitored with flow meters on the north and south end.

FDEP also requires the signage around the lakes, on the 1st and 10th tees, and on the scorecard. FDEP has also required that the city drill one monitoring well next to the irrigation lake on front nine of the Pines Course to be certain that reclaimed water is not migrating into the groundwater nearby.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES (FDACS)

Regulates pesticide use. FDACS requires that someone on the property be licensed in the safe and proper application of pesticides and that person is the applicator of record. Others may apply materials under his/her license. In our case that is me. We require that all assistants, second assistants, IPM manager and most all applicators have been licensed to apply materials safely. FDACS makes inspections to check records of applications to make sure we are complying with the labeled uses of the products. FDACS also inspects the general safe handling, application and storage of chemicals.

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SFWMD)

Monitors the quantity of irrigation water used. Each month we must document how much water has been used, and then the totals must be submitted to the district quarterly. Our permit specifies how much water we may use in a year. During water restrictions, we must report our pumpage weekly. We are currently on Phase II or a 30-percent reduction.

According to the South Florida Water Management District, golf courses only use 2.3 percent of the water compared to 48 percent for agriculture and 30 percent for public supply, half of which – or about 15 percent – is for outside watering.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- We are a member of Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary program for Golf Courses, fully certified since 1995 and we re-certify every two years.

- Yearly enrollment American Compliance Technology's Gold Environmental Program. ACT is a private company that works with businesses on issues like hazardous waste clean-

up, and provides environmental consulting. We use their services for OSHA-type inspections twice per year. Every six months or so, we are inspected by one of their environmental compliance specialists who audits our facility from the parking lot to the record keeping. When a potential violation is found, it is documented. After the audit we are given a report that includes a photo of the violation. They will also cite the OSHA violation and what the fine would have been. We normally have a follow-up in 60 days to ensure we have taken care of any problems that are found.

WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE

- We are inspected approximately quarterly by Royal Poinciana's workers compensation insurance company to make sure we are in compliance with safe working practices.

- Internally our department has a safety committee which meets regularly. We also have monthly safety training including a video and short test afterwards. The training is in English and Spanish.

STAFF TRAINING

Additional training required each year for all staff includes:

- Drug Free Workplace
- Sexual Harassment
- Violence in the Work place
- Hazardous Communication Training - reviews what is stored and applied here
- MSDS training - reviews how to read a Material Safety Data Sheet.
- Respirator training - for those who apply hazardous materials • Respirator fit testing - ensures that they can physically wear a respirator (For both of the above respirator categories, we bring someone in who is certified to train on this)

- Pesticide training - all licensed applicators must take continuing education classes to maintain their licenses.

A lot of safeguards are in place to monitor and ensure that our golf courses operate within the rules and regulations designed to ensure worker safety and environmental stewardship. ■



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The club has recycled 8 tons of cardboard using this compacter. Photo by Joe Hubbard

Going Green Can Save Lots of Green

Broken Sound Club Reduces its Carbon Footprint, Saves Money in the Process

By Shelly Foy, USGA Green Section

The motivation for undertaking projects often starts with one high-energy person. John Crean, general manager of the Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton is a knowledgeable, charismatic leader who is reducing energy costs, and therefore the carbon footprint of his club. Crean is not only looking for energy efficiency and fiscal economy, he always has protection of the environment in the back of his mind.

What do you do when you realize your cost for waste removal (i.e. dumpsters) approaches \$120,000 a year? Crean, along with Cathy Grana, assistant general manager, implemented a strict recycling program for the club. They eliminated polystyrene foam products and plastic water bottles, while also recycling cans, plastic, and

cardboard. To date, they have recycled eight tons of cardboard and two tons of plastic. The club is paid for the material they recycle, which helps offset their pickup costs.

Sometimes you have to get creative and even learn through trial and error. The club wanted to stop using foam, so they tried a biodegradable “ecotainer” cup but thorough research showed that the energy costs to make them was not friendly to the earth. They decided to use recyclable plastic cups, which posed a new challenge: the plastic cups sweated and dripped all over golfers.

With feedback from head professionals Scott Feller and John Skaf, Crean found a “koozie” that holds the plastic cups and fits into the golf cart’s built-in beverage holders; but golfers found that the koozies came out of the holders with the cups.

A grommet to hold the koozie in place solved that problem. When cleaning out the carts, employees remove the plastic cups and place them in the recycle bin.

But recycling wasn’t Crean’s only focus. Can you imagine Broken Sound’s

power bill with 86,000 sq. ft. in two clubhouses? One of the first steps was to replace the majority of light bulbs with compact fluorescents. They are anticipating measurable energy savings this year from just this one step.

Broken Sound had nine water heaters powered by natural gas. Crean learned that by replacing them with solar water heaters, the club could save \$15,000 a year in natural gas. Each solar water heater cost \$4,500 to install. There is a tax credit from the IRS of \$2,000 for each heater and Florida Power and Light offered a \$500 rebate per heater. Broken Sound’s investment will pay for itself in a little over a year.

Under the watchful eye of David Payne, facilities maintenance manager, solar panels were recently installed on the pool heaters, with an anticipated saving of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year. Not only was the choice of solar power good for the environment, it will result in significant savings to the club and considerably reduce its reliance on natural gas.

Broken Sound’s board of directors may approve a \$400,000 investment in digesters (compost units) if a three-month test proves successful.

On the day of my visit to Broken Sound, Tropical Treescapes, Inc., was picking up all of the food scraps and grass clippings mixed with palm fronds from the golf course to put in a test



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digester in Miami. They are seeking the right combination of materials to produce organic material that could be used as compost fertilizer on the fairways and roughs.

If the digester test works and Broken Sound proceeds with the investment, not only will the club be one of a handful in the country to produce their own composter fertilizer, Crean expects to save \$65,000 a year solely on reducing garbage and debris pickup. With golf course fertilizer costs increasing 80 percent since January, these digesters could potentially give the club a 33 percent reduction in fertilizer costs and water consumption over a period of two years.

In addition, if the 15-ft.-high, 50-ft.-by-8-ft. digesters are put into place, there is a plan to purchase debris from landscapers working within the club property, place this material in the digesters, and then sell the composted material back to these companies. If all

goes well with this project, it won't take long for the club to recover the cost of this investment.

The Broken Sound Club also is working toward certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf Courses. Joe Hubbard, CGCS, director of golf maintenance over both courses, is looking eventually to naturalize many areas, also resulting in cost savings. More than 60 bird species can be found at Broken Sound, and, since one of Hubbard's passions is photography, many of his photographs are featured on the cover of the club's bimonthly newsletter, as well as a few national magazines.

Efforts to conserve resources and save money do not come without a lot of serious thought and research. A future investment in solar golf carts already is under discussion. Although the technology is not quite practical yet, Crean believes it soon will be. He also mentioned a company in Utah that has



If this demo composter works, Broken Sound might save \$65,000 in garbage and debris hauling fees. Photo by Joe Hubbard.

developed solar roof panels that look like shingles, and the hope is that solar panels will become available in barrel tile shingles, which Broken Sound currently has as roofing material for the main clubhouse.

Clubhouse Manager Ed Chichiolo, Food and Beverage Manager Tim Nel-



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son, Membership Director Maureen Schreiber, several other department heads, the members and entire staff have embraced the energy conservation programs under way at Broken Sound. Having the desire to do the right things for the environment – taking time to

Drink koozie inserts in cart beverage holders enable use of biodegradable plastic cups. Photo by Joe Hubbard.

research energy conservation programs – and becoming knowledgeable about these topics are obviously important. John Crean’s message is that you can do the right things for the right reasons and save money at the same time. Being able to save money for your club can be called job security; saving energy and doing the right thing for the environment is just icing on the cake.



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Long Trip



**As I See It
By Jim Walker**

September 30 has been circled on my calendar since January. That is the last day of my employment managing golf courses with Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation. I have been crossing off the days one day at a time. There are only 33 more X's to make.

I have been working since I was 16 and 35 of those 48 years were spent on golf courses from Florida to Texas. My first job on a golf course was in 1957 when, as a 13-year-old, I walk-mowed greens for Paul Turcotte at Miami Springs CC. That was a nonpaying gig Mr. Turcotte gave me to keep me off the course hawking golf balls for green fees and lunch money. That job lasted three years.

My next job on a golf course came in 1971 when I worked for legendary superintendent Earl "Red" Jacobsen at Pecan Valley CC in San Antonio. I mowed greens, did prep work, and filled in for the night water man when he was off, sick, or on vacation. I was in heaven. I lived in a condo on the ninth fairway and got to play one the great courses in the

world free. Pecan Valley was built in 1960, designed by J. Press Maxwell, son of the great designer Perry Maxwell and Julius Boros beat Arnold Palmer there to win the 1968 PGA Championship at 2 over par. It was a brutal test of golf.

In 1973, I landed in Ocala and went to work for Jim Yancey, (Bert's brother) at Ocala GC. It was the only public 18-hole course in town and hosted about 70,000 rounds a year. I was the "working superintendent" and did everything. It was a great learning experience for the two years I was there and, through Mr. Yancey, I met and got to know his brother, Frank Beard, and Deane Beaman.

Now this may sound strange, but in 1975, I left Ocala GC to take the assistant's job at Silver Springs Shores just south of Ocala. It was a private club and the superintendent, Mel Sligh, was a UF graduate under the Godfather of Turf, Dr. GC (Granny) Horn. I took the job because I knew I would learn a lot from Mel, and I did. The biggest lesson I learned, which made me very sad, was that superintendents are always looking for better jobs. That was especially true in 1975 when they were building courses faster than you could blink. So there I was sitting with Mr. Sligh, when he told me he was leaving to take the job at Palma Ceia CC in Tampa, and he had recommended me to take his place.

Holy crap, I'm the new superintendent with only three years of fulltime experience at a big-time club that hosted a Florida Winter PGA Tour stop and a club full of mostly retired New

York and Pennsylvania golf nuts. The Shores was a monster designed by Desmond Muirhead on 220 acres. Well, I had a great crew and between them, my hard work and the free consultant I had in the person of my Par-Ex representative Bob Rehberg, I did a good job and didn't get fired. Bob, I'm so sorry I didn't call you when you won the "Wreath of Grass" award, but perhaps you'll read this and know how much your help meant to me. I will always remember our fishing stories and lies. I guess that's why they call them "fishing stories."

To Alan Weitzel who hired me in 1978, looked after me and helped guide and advise me through my 30 years with Dade County, thank you so much. Your friendship has meant more to me than you'll ever know. To Carlos McKeon who allowed me to come back to Briar Bay when I was sick, thank you. I would not have made it without you.

Most of all, to my wonderful wife Susi who has endured more than any human being should, thank you for your love, understanding, and friendship. You are truly "the wind beneath my wings."

I'm not going to miss getting up early almost every day. I will not miss mowing, watering, fertilizing, applying pesticides, or worrying about the weather... whether it's too hot or cold, too wet or dry. I'm going to be like John Lennon, who, when people used to bust his chops about not writing or recording enough songs, referred them to his song "I'm just sitting here watching the wheels go round and round, I just love to watch 'em roll." ■

**Green CAN
Be Easy**



**GREEN SIDE UP
By Joel Jackson**

Well, it may not be easy for a flannel frog puppet in a static-cling world, but it doesn't have to be difficult either. Given the political climate we are living in right now, Muppets and turf managers need to throw some fabric- and opinion-softener into the media machine.

Being green doesn't mean you have to be rich and revamp your whole operation. It will take the investment of some elbow grease and common sense and finally determination, documentation and education to move the public opinion and local government rule-making needle.

Review and revise your management practices when it comes to fertilizer and pesticide applications, but more than that, clearly state in no uncertain terms the intent of your golf club to preserve and protect the environment. Call it a mission statement, a pledge and manifesto, I don't care, but create an Environmental Plan for your course. You can use Audubon International literature and guidance or the checklist from the back of the 2007 Golf Course BMP manual or

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First thing – and this is like dieting to lose weight – make the commitment.

maybe the USGA has some language you can borrow.

The point is, everyone has to make a conscious commitment to observe best management practices, document them and announce them to the world. You can start by practicing on your own golfers; you don't have to book an interview with the media. Get results first and then get comfortable talking about them. You may not be the public spokesperson for your club, but you are the ultimate source for the leadership of practicing good stewardship by your staff.

First thing – and this is like dieting to lose weight – make the commitment. Clean up the maintenance compound, the shop, storage facilities, wash-down areas and your offices and locker rooms. First impressions set the tone. Brooms, blowers and paint brushes aren't that expensive. Take small steps and set fixed goals, and keep at it until it becomes routine. Just do it.

Buffer zones need to be phased in around all water bodies. Cease fertilizer and chemical applications within the immediate area adjacent to them. Several courses have done this successfully and, by raising heights of cut wherever possible, they mitigate the possibility of compromising water quality on or off the course.

Don't assume members or players will rebel against

tall rough or slope cuts near water, or recoil from aquatic plants on the littoral shelf. One of the best filters and nutrient-removing tactics is anchored floating islands of aquatic plants promoted by Beeman's Nursery. Steve Beeman recently read off the amounts of nutrients and heavy metals that these plant islands take out of the water. It exceeds the ability of shoreline plants. The islands may work if members or the designer are dead set against creating a "wild-looking" lake bank.

One of the most successful trends in course conservation measures has been the conversion of out-of-play areas into non-irrigated natural areas. Removal of maintenance inputs like water, fertilizer and pesticides are a real positive statement and tangible evidence of a golf course's stewardship commitment. Doesn't it make sense in these tough times to reduce operating costs wherever possible?

Considering the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, ADA requirements and growing local regulations, following best management practices won't really be voluntary. Many courses already get it but I think documentation, public outreach and education could be improved.

Go to that checklist in the back of the BMP manual and see how you stack up. Don't you already fulfill some of those basic practices? Have you taken any steps to put it on the record? Do you have a written plan? Get ahead of the curve now and avoid being behind the eight-ball later. ■



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