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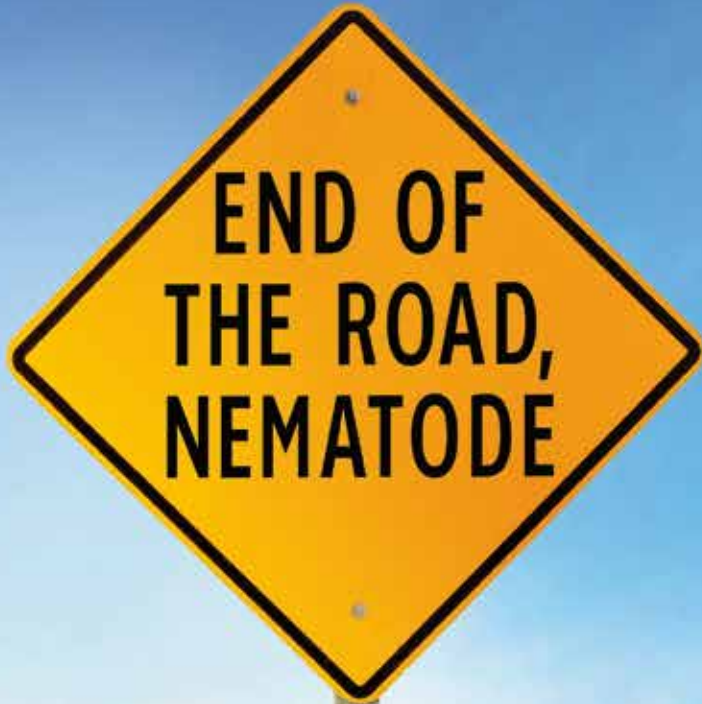
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Rafael Barajas, CGCS
is the 83rd president of
GCSAA and the fourth
from Florida.

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Emotions Outweighing Science When it Comes to Glyphosate

If you believe some of the headlines and discussions on the internet, you could be forgiven for thinking Round Up will kill you. Even if you bother to dig a little deeper, you could be forgiven for still being confused whether it is a carcinogen or in fact safe when properly applied. The sad truth is that, despite the facts, it might not matter what conclusion you, or I, come too.

We are at a time and a place where science and facts apparently stand for little when it comes to products containing glyphosate. Instead, opposition based on emotions seems to be ruling the day for a large part of the population. In some ways this is understandable.

We are all concerned about issues affecting our health and our tendency is to be suspicious of big corporations. Some of that stems from examples of companies covering up the health risks of tobacco or of the behavior of big banks leading up to the Great Recession. Examples like those can sow big seeds of doubt.

The sheer size of some of these corporate entities can also be overwhelming, so we often find ourselves siding with the little man because it's easier to imagine ourselves on that side of things. It's not just us. Often, the media seems drawn to the same posture. Big targets make for bigger news and therefore bigger business.

Individually, we are not always the best at doing our due diligence either. We can turn a spark into a social media firestorm in seconds these days. So before long, there can be a narrative out there that, by sheer volume of traffic and buzz, becomes accepted as "fact." I hate to sound all gloom and doom but unless we educate people, and enough of them, to the science and the truth, we will lose this valuable product.

A quick Google search reveals that the City of Stuart has banned the use of Round Up and the City of Miami has done the same. Recently, Harrell's announced it was ceasing Round Up sales because insurers refused to provide adequate coverage. Separate California court rulings that Round Up contributed to users contracting cancer have lent real weight to opposition.

All of this flies in the face of studies by the EPA and other regulatory bodies that, quoting the EPA's own website: "...found there is no evidence glyphosate is toxic to the nervous or immune systems. They also found it is not a developmental or reproductive toxin."

Additionally, the EPA says: "These agencies looked at cancer rates in humans and studies where laboratory animals were fed high doses of glyphosate. Based on these studies, they determined that glyphosate is not likely to be carcinogenic. However, a committee of scientists working for the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the WHO evaluated fewer studies and reported that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic."

That latter point sounds alarming but there has been a chorus of scientific voices challenging that committee's finding. As Mac Carraway from EREF wrote in The Florida Green last year, "The concerns are almost always traced back to a wholly-discredited article coming out of the IARC/World Health Organization. That article was found to have purposefully withheld critical information showing no public health risk because of their desire to achieve a particular outcome – i.e. to eliminate the use of glyphosate."

I, like every other superintendent I know, am all for protecting our environment. But I also believe in research and science. If we allow emotion to rule here, what products will be next?

As professionals in the golf industry, we need to educate those around us, our neighbors, the people sitting next you at your local brew pub or who you run into at the home improvement store. Failure to stem the current tide could soon find us tackling our weed issues with vinegar, salt and dish soap.

John Curran, John's Island Club



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On the Road Again: My Travel Top 10

My job as your executive director requires me to spend a lot of time traveling throughout Florida to chapter events, county commissioner meetings and various other committee meetings. Most recently, I was in Tallahassee for both Florida Turfgrass Day and Florida Golf Day. Driving back from the Panhandle, I reflected on my recent travels and thought about what I have learned in the past year or so.

With all due respect to ESPN and SportsCenter, here is my Top 10:

1. Expect the unexpected. You never know who you might run into or who you may have dinner with. This was true last year while attending Florida Golf Day. We had the unexpected pleasure of having dinner with Sheriff Grady Judd of Polk County. That was interesting. Did you know the Sheriff and our new Governor both wear cowboy boots with their suits? One wears them better, but I will keep his identity to myself.

2. Leave early. Traffic is unpredictable and you never know what you may run into, like rogue – or at least roaming - cows on I-75. Yes, that happened, and I've even encountered a herd of cattle crossing highway 714. It isn't always the predictable traffic. Again, expect the unexpected.

3. Don't store your golf shoes in the garage. Dry rot is a real thing and there is nothing like having your soles falling off after the first couple of holes at Sailfish Point; and the only shoes in the pro shop that fit me were cherry red. Yep, that happened. Again, expect the unexpected.

4. Bring extra shoes. Heels can break and you are never expecting it when they do. Again, expect the unexpected.

5. Don't assume all classroom space is created equal. I can assure you the Golf BMP classes held in Wimauma, Fort Pierce or West Palm Beach were held in far more comfortable facilities than the one held in North Fort Myers. I am certain those attending that class would agree. Again, expect the unexpected.

6. Smile often - even when you are referred to as Heather! I will take it as a compliment because I know Heather Russo well; but I represent the Florida GCSA, not the Florida Turfgrass Association.

7. Speak up. Most folks have no idea what golf course superintendents do. Make the effort to share with them all that you do that is great. I do, and every time I know I have changed someone's mind in a positive way about something; fertilizer use, management practices, or the environment. If you are BMP certified, share that fact and what it means. The BMP certification is more important now than ever.

8. Show up. If you have the chance to show up at a county commission meeting, your representative or senator's office, or anywhere on behalf of your profession, please do. They will be happy to see you. Tell them what you do. Share a story. Believe me, they like to hear them.

9. And finally, get to know your members, your golfers. You all have great stories; how you got into this career, family tales, professional stories – I enjoy hearing about all of them. You are what makes my job so enjoyable and that makes it easy for me to share what a great industry this is, because it is made up of great individuals.

10. Always buy the raffle ticket. Invariably, the money goes to a great cause and ... I won two TVs in a one-month period. Now that was unexpected! ■

- Jennifer Bryan, Executive Director



Red shoes to the rescue - what all the best executive directors are wearing on the golf course these days.

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CENTRAL FLORIDA



Winners at Orange Tree in March were Billy Griffith, Sunniland Corporation; Chris Zinna, Mayfair Country Club; Jay Buccellato, West Orange Country Club; and Chris Cartin, Brandt.

Congratulations to Chris Flynn and his team at Bay Hill Club on another great Arnold Palmer Invitational. And thank you to all the sponsors that provided staff and food to the team at Bay Hill. Everyone's collective efforts bring a lot of positive focus to our region.

By the time you read this, we will have determined our chapter champions for the year. We were headed to Suntree Country Club on April 25 thanks to host Jon Cockerham. Our annual meeting is May 22 and includes golf on the Walt Disney World Lake Buena Vista Course. Our host will be Mark Harper. Other dates to note are July 22 for the Arnie's Army event at Bay Hill Club and this year's Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot Open is at Orange County National on December 6 with Jason Morris as our host.

In March, we visited Orange Tree Golf Club for what was a great outing. Thank you to everyone at Orange Tree including Rob Torri, Chris Purcell, Jim Purcell, the culinary and golf staff. Our winners were Billy Griffith, Sunniland Corporation; Chris Zinna, Mayfair Country Club; Jay Buccellato, West Orange Country Club; and Chris Cartin, Brandt.

Runners-up were Josh Kelley, Hawk's Landing Golf Club; Kevin Rotti, Legacy

Club at Alaqua Lakes; Mike Gay, Winter Pines Golf Club; and Josh Waring, Trigon Turf Services. Third was the team of Ron Palsgrove, Target Specialty Products; Scott Scamehorn, CGCS Mountain Lake Country Club; Chester Vandenberg, Corteva Agriscience; and Joe Ballant, Grand Cypress Golf Club.

For the longest drive and closest to the pin competitions, we picked names out the hat to find winners: Buck Buckner, Tampa Bay Turf Management; Mike Gay, Winter Pines Golf Club; Sam Gardner, Isleworth Country Club; Josh Kelley, Hawk's Landing Golf Club; and Rob Torri, Orange Tree Golf Club.

Don't forget our scholarship program which is open to family members of affiliate members, chapter members and the board of directors. Applications close May 15.

- Lisa McDowell

NORTH FLORIDA

Al Clements and his assistant Joey Flinchbaugh and all the staff once again did a wonderful job hosting our annual Glen Klauk Research Tournament at Pablo Creek Club. It was a beautiful day

with some great food, beverages and great fellowship. As a result of a full tee sheet and great support, we will be able to donate a new high of \$8,000 to the turfgrass research fund in Florida this year. Special thanks to our sponsors including Wesco Turf, Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply, Howard Fertilizer, Beard Equipment Company, FIS Outdoor, Golf Agronomics and Site One.

Golf winners were, in the low gross, Jack Creveling from Golden Ocala Golf and Equestrian Club, and in the low net, Glen Klauk. Winners in the best ball event were Tony Kimball, Arch Capeland, Bob Wicker and Rod McKnight.

At press time we were getting ready to head to LPGA International for our Memorial Tournament, hosted by John Lammrsh. This tournament funds our scholarship grants which we give every year to deserving kids of our members. Last year we were very proud to have given five well-deserved scholarship grants. On May 16, we head to the Creek Course at Hammock Dunes to raise money for our

benevolent fund.

Also be sure to participate in our fourth annual Inshore Fishing Tournament on June 22. Keep an eye out for more information on this great event and our annual meeting in July. This year's Fall Classic is on October 18 to 20 at the Omni Resort at Amelia Island.

- Betty Hooten.

SEVEN RIVERS

As this issue of The Florida Green goes to print, we are looking forward to the annual Jeff Hayden Memorial Envirotron Classic at World Woods Golf Club in Brooksville. This is one of the largest turfgrass fundraisers in Florida and offers the opportunity to play for a greener future. Many thanks to Golf Ventures as our champion sponsor of the event.

Since its start in 1993, the tournament has raised more than \$1 million. Proceeds have helped fund the work of the Envirotron

Turfgrass Research Laboratory on the main campus at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The facility was dedicated to the memory of Jeff Hayden in 2005. The tournament has also helped maintain the UF Turfgrass Research Unit in Citra.

The Seven Rivers GCSA board or directors urges all members to consider donating to Rounds4Research this year. Seven Rivers GCSA and the Florida GCSA receive a large portion of the sale of these rounds to benefit our research initiatives throughout the state. Our goal is to raise over \$35,000 in 2019. This is a great opportunity to invest in the future well-being of our facilities and the industry as a whole. This year's auction runs April 30 to May 6.

Thank you to Janet O'Dell for hosting our meeting at Arlington Ridge Golf Club in Leesburg on March 28. It's a busy time of year for all of us and we appreciate Janet and her staff for welcoming us to Arlington Ridge.

- Andy Jorgensen, CGCS On Top of the World.



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PALM BEACH



Ryan Powell with Tropicars, hits a shot at the Palm Beach Par 3 during the March golf outing.



GCSA's Ralph Dain speaks to the group during the recent BMP Certification class at Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club in Boca Raton.



Attendees at the Palm Beach GCSA Assistants Only Meeting listen carefully as Mark Reid, Ryan Swilley and Brad Nelson touch on industry related subjects offered in a solid evening of education.

On January 21, the Palm Beach GCSA headed to Broken Sound Club for an afternoon round of golf and an evening of education led by Brian Beckner of Native Bird Boxes. Brian's presentation was followed by an overview of Broken Sound's environmental initiatives led by The New Course superintendent, Kyle Asbury. Broken Sound's director of golf course management, Shannon Easter, and his team have become leaders in the industry regarding environmental sustainability.

Our annual Assistants Only Meeting was at The Seagate Country Club on February 20. Host superintendent and Palm Beach GCSA secretary, Nate Watkin, had the course in pristine shape for nine holes of



Erik Thor with Sunniland tees off at the Palm Beach Par 3.

golf followed by an educational panel of a few local, well-respected superintendents. Mark Reid, The Breakers; Ryan Swilley, Gulf Stream Golf Club; and Brad Nelson, St. Andrews Country Club; offered a wealth of information and career advice to our local assistants. A huge thank you goes to Everglades Equipment Group for their gracious sponsorship of this well-attended event.

On March 7, Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club hosted a local BMP Certification class. Special thanks to Robert Anderson and Jennifer Bryan for facilitating this event. The state of Florida was the first in the nation to implement this certification program of Best Management Practices and it has been paramount in demonstrating our commitment to environmentally responsible turfgrass management. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to participate in this voluntary program and achieved certification.

The Palm Beach GCSA gathered on March 14 for our annual golf only event at the Palm Beach Par 3. The winds were

blowing as usual as 54 golfers tested their short game skills for 18 closest-to-the-pin contests. Congrats to Kevin Downing and his A game, as his name was written on darn near every CTP sheet!

The Palm Beach GCSA board of directors were again sending a few board representatives to Washington D.C. to participate in National Golf Day on May 1. This has been a wonderful opportunity for our local industry leaders to represent Florida in several meetings with members of Congress and federal agencies. We also planned to participate in a community service project on the National Mall on April 30.

Mark your calendars now and be on the lookout for more information coming soon for our 39th Annual Future of Golf Tournament at The Falls Club on June 8, and also the 18th Annual Steve Wright Classic Fishing Tournament set for June 15.

As always, we would like to thank our superintendent and affiliate members for their ongoing support of the Palm Beach GCSA. We hope to see everyone soon at one of our many upcoming events.

- Parker Ferren, St. Andrews Club.

CALUSA

As the spring season really kicks into gear, we want to congratulate two of our members on recent moves. Our incoming president, Mitch Miller, has moved on from The Dunes Golf and Tennis Club and is now at Legends Golf and Country Club in Fort Myers. Eric Oster has gone from Coral Oaks Golf Course to the Country Club of the Everglades in Naples. Mitch and Eric are great superintendents who will serve their new facilities really well.

In March, we enjoyed an outing at Alico Family Golf in Fort Myers with a two-club challenge under lights and lots of spouses and kids turning out. Alico is one of those places where beginners can fall in love with the game and therefore serves a vital role in the golf industry. So, we're always happy to go there and support their business and have a lot of fun while we're at it.

At press time, we were honing our skills

for our challenge against the Suncoast GCSA at Charlotte Harbor National Golf Club at Bobcat Trail. This year's event was going to offer the chance to support efforts to prevent child abuse through the MANicure Movement. This movement started right here in Central Florida and is a grassroots campaign aimed at raising awareness of child abuse as a national health crisis.

In May, we are off to the Poa weekend in Naples and then on June 24, we have our own annual meeting at Cypress Lake Country Club with host Bryce Koch, CGCS. We'll have some turnover on our board with at least three new board members. There are already nominations to fill each of the three seats coming open but if anyone else would like to throw their hat into the ring, please let a current board member know.

Of course, the golf will be great but one of the highlights of the day will be the steak and lobster we'll be dining on. So even if

you're golf game isn't at its best, just bring your appetite and you're guaranteed a good time. See you there.

- Jake Wentz, Verandah Club

FLORIDA WEST COAST

On March 6, we held our annual Education Meeting at Palma Ciega Golf and Country Club. Speakers included Susan Haddock from Hillsborough County Extension who spoke on "Pollinator Protection and Establishing Pollinator Protected Areas on Golf Courses." Dr. Billy Crow, UF professor of nematology discussed "Organic Amendments, Bio stimulants, Root-Enhancers, as tools for Nematode Management." Steve Kammerer, USGA agronomist, gave a presentation on the "State of the Golf Course Industry in the Southeast and Trends in Turf" and Dr. Lane Treadway, of Syngenta spoke about "Managing Difficult Weeds and Diseases in Warm-Season Turf."

We would like to thank host superintendent Carson Kemps at Palma Ciega for hosting this event and all the speakers for taking the time to share their experience and education with us.

Innisbrook hosted the Valspar Tournament on their Copperhead course in March. This is a great tournament to have in the Tampa Bay area and is a great opportunity for local turfgrass industry members to volunteer and for golf enthusiasts and spectators to attend a great tournament. The tournament has been extended through 2025. Great job by the Innisbrook staff and thank you to all the volunteers that came out to help.

We are fortunate to be headed to the Copperhead course on October 22 for our annual Research and Benefit Golf Tournament. Mark your calendars also for our annual meeting at Old Memorial on June 4.

- Ryan Franklin, St. Petersburg Country Club

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CHAPTER ROUND UP

SUNCOAST



Dan Haubein presented prizes to the sporting clay winning team of Bill Shearer, Tyler Jones, Dillan Drost and Sean Veen.



Dan Haubein with Tyler Jones and his Yeti Cooler from Everglades Equipment Group. Jeremy Nipper, right, actually won the cooler in the individual sporting clays but chose to pass it on to Tyler, who finished second.



Lee Crosby, Dan Haubein, Jeremy Nipper and Preston Stephenson, not pictured, were second in the sporting clays team event.



Suncoast GCSA members enjoy lunch at the sporting clays event provided by Everglades Equipment Group.

The Suncoast GCSA had our second annual sporting clays event on March 28 at Sarasota Gun Club at Knight Trail Park in Nokomis. This was a free event which drew an excellent turnout with double the attendance from last year bringing together superintendents, assistant superintendents, equipment managers, technicians and vendors for a fun afternoon of competition. Lunch was catered by Mission BBQ.

Jeremy Nipper won the individual competition with a score of 49 out of 50. Second, with a score of 46 out of 50, was a tie between Tyler Jones and Bill Shearer with Tyler winning in a scorecard playoff. Tyler and Bill happened to be on the same team which helped them to a first-place finish in the team event. They combined with Dillan Drost and Sean Veen to score 166 out of 200. Second with 163 out of 200 was Lee Crosby, Dan Haubein, Jeremy Nipper and Preston Stephenson.

It was a fantastic day for all in attendance and a big thank you to Everglades

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Equipment Group for sponsoring lunch and prizes for the day.

At press time we were getting ready for the Suncoast GCSA versus Calusa GCSA joint chapter meeting at Charlotte Harbor National Golf Club at Bobcat Trail mid-April. This is our annual Ryder Cup-style match play golf event between the two chapters.

Next is our biggest event of the year, the 2019 Suncoast Scramble on May 6 at Sara Bay Country Club. We have an impressive group of speakers lined up for the event with Rhett Evans, chief executive officer of GCSAA; Rafael Barajas, CGCS the 83rd president of GCSAA; Darren Davis, CGCS GCSAA's immediate past-president, Kevin Sunderman, GCSAA director; and Bryan Unruh, Ph.D. University of Florida.

Then on May 14, Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club will host the 5th grade Garden Elementary class for a First Green field trip organized by Dan Haubein and Nick Kearns. Founded in 1997, the First Green is a GCSAA program that pairs golf courses with local schools for unique science, technology, engineering

and mathematics (STEM) learning opportunities using golf courses as a lab. More information can be found at www.thefirstgreen.org

- Lee Crosby, Harrell's

SOUTH FLORIDA

The South Florida GCSA traveled to Parkland Golf and Country Club in January to hear guest speaker Lee Butler, extension coordinator with North Carolina State University. His talk - "From Microscopes to Research Plots - How Diagnostics Drives Research" - was an extremely educational experience and well received by all. Lunch and golf followed to round out a great event.

On March 21, we hosted the 31st Annual Otto Schmessier Turfgrass Industry Exposition at the UF/IFAS Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center. We had a full morning of field tours and education with equipment demos and talks from our presenting sponsors to the over 250 people in attendance. The South Florida chapter has always had a great partnership

with UF and IFAS and we look forward to continuing that in years to come.

It was a great turnout, perfect weather and an all-around good time by all. We want to thank Dr. Bryan Unruh, Karen Williams and her team, the research presenters, and all the volunteers for all the hard work in organizing and setting up the event, without which none of this could have been possible. We look forward in working with the new turfgrass faculty member for next year's event to build upon this wonderful tradition.

At press time we were looking forward to the second annual South Florida Chapter picnic at Markham Park in Sunrise on April 20. Free food and non-alcoholic drinks were to be provided to everyone in the industry and their families. Markham Park has many activities to take part in; like 12 miles of mountain bike trails, fishing, dog park, butterfly gardens, shooting range, and a remote-controlled airplane area just to name a few. It was sure to be a great event.

- Jason Bailey, Parkland Golf and Country Club



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EVERGLADES

With the 2019 winter golfing season coming up very soon, it's time to break out the aerifiers and verticutters. The Everglades GCSA has been busy getting all the information and details ready for the summer's biggest event, the Poa Annua Golf Classic and G.C. Horn Memorial Tournament at Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club in Naples. This year's event will take place from May 16 to 18. You should have received your invitation by now, so sign up early as we expect a full house this year.

The Everglades GCSA dinner meeting was at The Club Pelican Bay with our host golf course superintendent Bob Bittner, CGCS. The event was well attended thanks to many spouses and significant others joining us for dinner. This year's education was a discussion hosted by Everglades GCSA president Aaron Ohloff on the transition from golf course superintendent to the general manager position at the club. Our main speakers were Nicholas von Hoffen, CGCS from Colliers Reserve and Matt Gaudet, CGCS from The Forest Country Club. Both gentlemen discussed the different ways to move up to their current positions.

The annual assistant superintendent barbecue social was at Royal Poinciana Golf Club, Naples in March with a great turnout. Host assistant superintendent and Everglades GCSA board member, Coleman Torgersen, reported the event went well with many local vendors and superintendents in attendance.

Many thanks to all those members who brought toys along to our Christmas event at Bonita Bay Club in Naples. Their generosity made the holiday season a little brighter for a lot of kids.

As the days get longer, the temperatures start to rise, kids are home, you know it is time to start your summer projects. A safe and great summer to everyone.

- Kevin Leo, Quail Creek Country Club



Part of the crowd at the assistant superintendent barbecue social at Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples.



Speaker Nicholas von Hoffen, CGCS from Colliers Reserve and wife Katelin.



Speaker Matt Gaudet, CGCS from The Forest Country Club and wife Raquel.



The Everglades GCSA collected a major haul for Toys for Tots at Bonita Bay Club.



Top finishers in the chipping contest at Royal Poinciana were winner Carl Michael, second Brian Diehl, and third, Trevor Floyd.

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Longboat Key Plays Host to FLORIDA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

The Resort at Longboat Key Club in Sarasota will host this year's Florida GCSA Golf Championship and annual Roundtable on July 25 and 26. Longboat Key steps into the host role after a renovation project put on hold plans to visit Grand Cypress Resort in Orlando.

"We're really excited about the opportunity to visit Longboat Key," says Deron Zendt, Florida GCSA golf committee chairman. "Beachside on the Gulf is a great place for families and from a golf perspective, the chance to see courses with platinum paspalum from tee to green will be of interest to a lot of superintendents."

Host superintendent at Longboat Key, John Reilly, oversaw the installation of the paspalum since arriving in 2009. The grass was an antidote to chronic water quality issues that were being treated with sulphur. None of the water treatment sites on property were



John Reilly will host this year's Florida GCSA golf championship at Longboat Key.

functioning when Reilly arrived. "It was unbelievable," he told The Florida Green last year. "The greens were ruined. They looked like Rorschach tests."

That is now ancient history. New grassing and a redesign of the Links Course by Ron Garl have generated widespread positive reviews. Golf Advisor raved about the paspalum which it says, "gives the golf course an eye-popping color and outstanding playing conditions."

Longboat Key has 45 holes with 18 on the Linkside course adjacent to the beach resort, and 27 holes at the Harbourside course about two miles north.

This year's reception and roundtable on the eve of the golf championship will feature a discussion among superintendents who host some of Florida's PGA Tour stops. Florida basically becomes home for the Tour in March, with the Honda Classic at PGA National, the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill Club and Lodge, The Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass and the Valspar Championship at Innisbrook Resort, all back to back.

Look for registration information coming soon from the Florida GCSA. ■

View of the Harbourside course at Longboat Key.

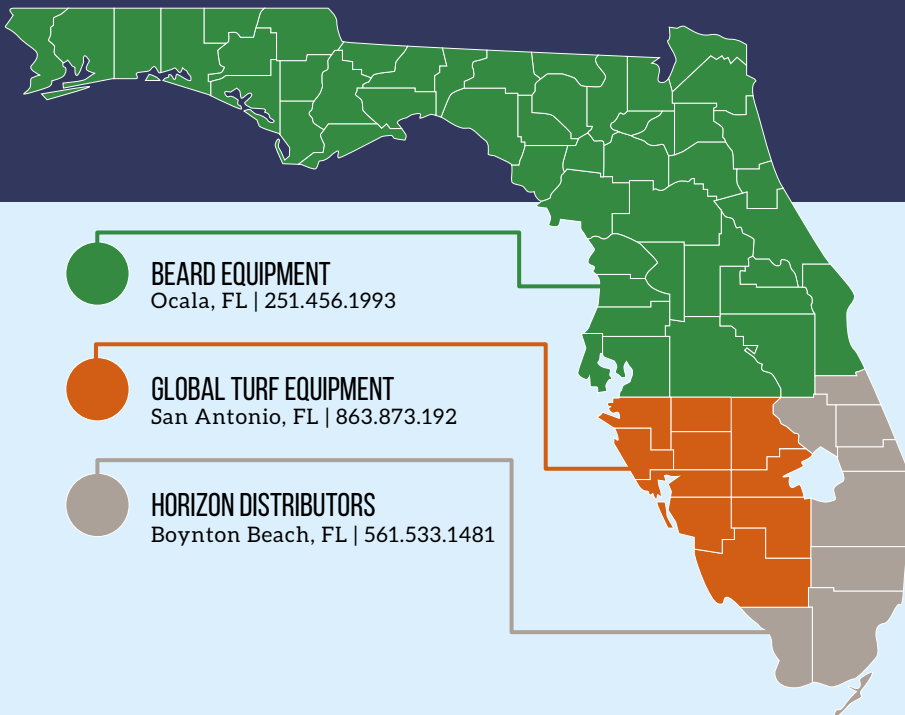


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Florida Welcome Helped Barajas with Transition

Not surprisingly, becoming president of GCSAA was one of the greatest moments in the professional career of Rafael Barajas, CGCS director of golf course maintenance at Boca Grove Golf and Tennis Club in Boca Raton. But a few hours before the traditional parade of white-coated past-presidents escorted him to his new role, Barajas sat in a back room of the San Diego Convention Center reflecting on one of the saddest times.

The lead up to those few poignant minutes began with his arrival in Florida from Hacienda Golf Club in La Habra Heights, CA in December 2015. After what many might count as a full career to that point, Barajas was brave and bold enough to want to start a new phase clear on the other side of the country. He had confidence in his ability but still he says the welcome he received from his new colleagues in Florida was a major factor in what has clearly been a successful transition.

One of the first to welcome Barajas was the late Steve Wright, CGCS. That wouldn't surprise any of the countless many who knew Wright and had been on the receiving end of his generous spirit. Which is why his unexpected death last fall hit the golf course superintendent profession and the Florida GCSA, where he was vice-president, so particularly hard.

After hearing the news, Barajas admits going home from work, and for several days taking a cigar into the backyard and "crying my eyes out." Wright and Barajas played golf regularly, talked shop, life, and perhaps most importantly for them both, they talked family. Of course, there were others who helped Barajas find his feet in a new part of the country.

Steve Pearson, CGCS from The Falls Club of the Palm Beaches was one, as was Robert Anderson from Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club. Many others Barajas had met through association meetings, on committees and at events like the Golf Industry Show also extended welcoming hands. It all helped further cement what Barajas knew to be true about the profession and why he has driven to service, to pay it forward.

"Florida was not my target state," he says of his initial search, which centered more in the middle of the country. "But when this position became available, I knew immediately it was what I was looking for. It was a challenge and a risk but I'd reached a point where I needed a new kind of challenge and I got that with new turf varieties and a new culture from the one I was used to."



GCSAA past-presidents Palmer Maples, Jr. CGCS, left, and Mel Lucas, right, escort Rafael Barajas, CGCS into his role as the 83rd president of GCSAA at the annual meeting in San Diego, CA.

Barajas says he is grateful of the support of he has received from Boca Grove as a club and from his staff, many of which he inherited. "I believe in working with the talent that is there," he says. "That helps me get better."

One skill Barajas employs in new scenarios is "listening to understand, not listening to answer." "It's amazing how productive your meetings and conversations can become when you do that," he says. "Especially when there is conflict going on or the potential for conflict. I try very hard to really hear what someone is trying to tell me. Throughout my career I do not always say everything I think but I always think what I say."

Much has been made of Barajas being the first Hispanic president of the national superintendent association. And rightly so. He arrived in the U.S. from Mexico in 1978 at the age of 14, and as the 11th of 14 children. He spoke no English when his family immigrated. His is a story of a dream realized by hard work. "You can make excuses, or you can make it happen," he says.

Barajas is proud of his heritage and hopes it inspires others of Hispanic descent, just as much as he hopes it inspires anyone of any descent. "I do what I do because I believe in what I do," he says. "I've done everything that others before me have done to get here. I just happen to be Hispanic."

He is the fourth superintendent from the Sunshine State to lead the national association and takes over from another Florida superintendent, Darren Davis, CGCS from Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples. The first was Gary Grigg in 1995 and then Bob Randquist, CGCS, now chief operating officer at GCSAA, in 2011.

San Diego, CA may be a long way from the East Coast, but Florida GCSA members made themselves at home during the Golf Industry Show there in February. Shannon Easter from Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton was a major winner in the Environmental Leader in Golf Awards and 275 turned out on a chilly evening for the annual Florida GCSA reception at the Hotel Palomar.

Florida members were also prominent in the national superintendent golf championship. Seth Strickland, a three-time winner, from Miami Shores Country Club, tied for second place, and Florida GCSA director Bryce Koch, CGCS from Cypress Lake Country Club tied for fourth. They were also members of the Florida GCSA No. 1 team that finished second in the national team championship, along with Chris Zinna from Mayfair Country Club in Sanford, John Lammrigh from LPGA International in Daytona Beach, and Michael Kelly from Gulf Harbor Yacht and Country Club in Fort Myers.

Another Florida GCSA director, Mitch Miller from The Dunes Golf and Tennis Club in Sanibel, and Ryan Dykes from Camp Creek Golf Club in Panama City Beach, were among 13 superintendents who received trips to GIS through the Melrose Leader-

ship Academy. At GIS they participated in networking and leadership activities and a variety of education seminars.

Two other Florida GCSA members Preston Stephenson from Misty Creek Country Club in Sarasota and J. Roy Rowland from Lake Wales Country Club in Lake Wales also traveled as guests to GIS. They were among 10 superintendents selected for all-inclusive trips provided by Bayer. Bayer partners with the Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of GCSAA, to sponsor the Bayer Superintendent Grant Program. Grant winners receive airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, conference full-pack registration, two education seminars and a travel stipend.

Daniel Palin from Vinoy Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg was one of 11 assistant superintendents chosen for the second class of the EXCEL Leadership Program, funded by Nufarm and administered by the Environmental Institute for Golf.

A former Floridian, Carlos Arraya, won TurfNet Superintendent of the Year, presented by Syngenta. Now at Bellerive Country Club in St. Louis, MO which hosted the PGA Championship in 2018, Arraya spent time in Florida at Black Diamond Ranch, Hawk's Nest Golf Club and The Venice Golf and Country Club.

Next year's Golf Industry Show is in Orlando from January 25 to 30.

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Gregory Jack, TPC at Treviso Bay.



Brant Dittmer, The Club at Shell Point; Aaron Ohloff, Wyndemere Country Club; and Jordan Nemitz, Plant Food Company.



Bill Kistler, Down to Earth.



Scott Scamehorn, CGCS Mountain Lake Country Club; and Brooks Riddle, Revels Turf and Tractor.



Taylor Turner, Numerator Technologies.



Parker Ferren, St. Andrews Club; and Craig Smith, former GCSAA communications director.

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TurfNet Superintendent of the Year and former Florida GCSA member Carlos Arraya, Bellerive Country Club.



Mitch Miller, The Dunes Golf and Tennis Club; and Jim Torba, Pelican preserve Golf Club.



Joseph Hubbard, CGCS Boca Delray Golf and Country Club.



Peter Brooks, The Everglades Club.



Mark Burrows, Burrows Turfgrass Services; and John Lapikas, Mariner Sands Country Club.

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Florida GCSA vice-president Nick Kearns, new GCSAA president Rafael Barajas, CGCS, Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan, Florida GCSA president John Curran, GCSAA immediate past-president Darren Davis, CGCS, GCSAA chief operating officer Bob Randquist, CGCS, Florida GCSA director Andy Neiswender, and GCSAA chief executive officer Rhett Evans.

Bill Kistler, Down 2 Earth; Ralph Brannin, Beard Equipment; and Curt Lampe, Seven Springs Golf and Country Club.



Derek Denison, Lake Nona Golf and Country Club; Eric Swenson, Floridian National Golf Club; Brandon Richey, Lake Nona Golf and Country Club, and wife Stephanie; with Debbie and Steve Ciardullo, of Beard Equipment.

Florida GCSA president John Curran from John's Island Club with raffle winner Doug Francis of Hector Turf and association vice-president Nick Kearns from The Oaks Club.



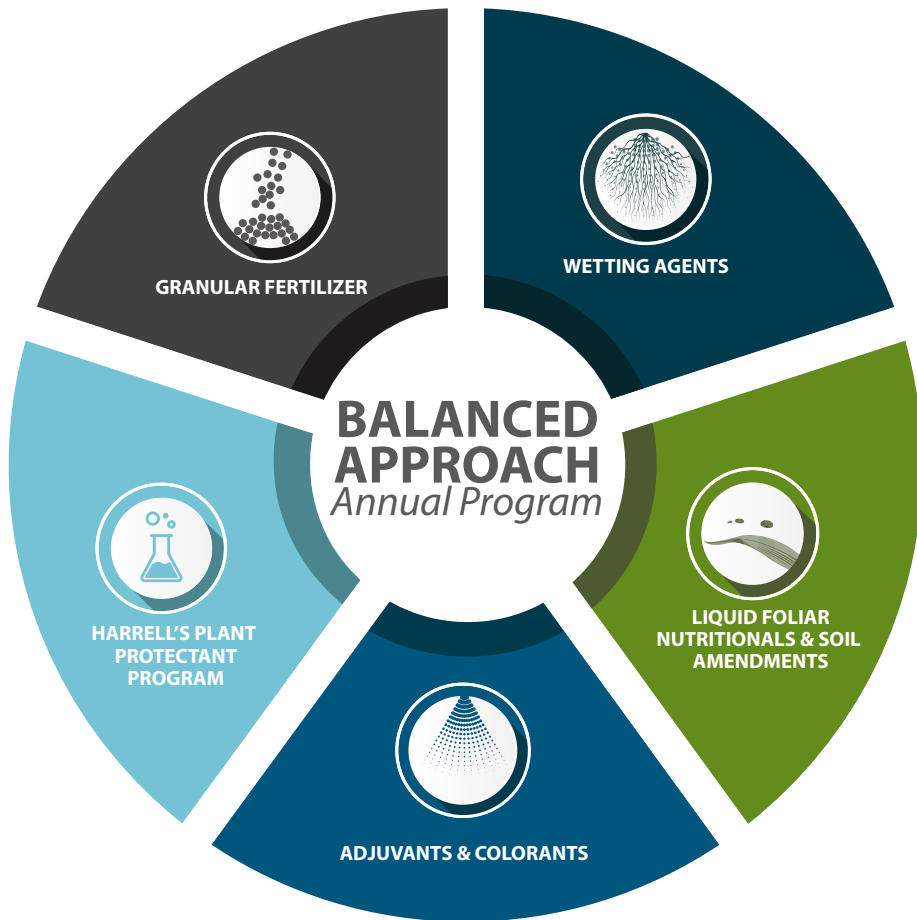
Dawn and Kevin Rotti, Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes.



Matt Dimase, The Abaco Club on Winding Bay; and Chester Vandenberg, Corteva Agriscience.



John Reilly, The Resort at Longboat Key Club; and Sean Moffit, Everglades Turf Equipment.



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Protect Your Turf From Stress



By Todd Lowe
Bayer Green Solutions Team

Turf pathogens are opportunistic pests and affect stressed and weakened turf when weather conditions favor disease development. Understanding stresses and when they occur can help determine the best approaches to guard against disease pressure and maintain healthy turf.

Understanding Stress

- **Biotic Stress** – These are stresses caused by living organisms like diseases, insects and nematodes.
- **Abiotic Stresses** – These account for all non-living factors that affect turf health and include shade, low sunlight, excessive soil moisture/thatch, traffic, low mowing, high heat and poor air movement.

Weather Conditions

The time of year for most diseases in Florida is the “shoulder months” consisting of cooler, wet weather. However, late spring and summer can be a difficult time – especially with diseases like fairy ring and take-all root rot (aka bermudagrass decline). Fairy ring tends to favor erratic periods of rainfall and reduced soil moisture. It is also during these times that take-all root rot can injure turf, as prolonged cloudy weather and reduced sunlight penetration weakens turfgrass roots.

Cultural Programs to Favor Turf Growth

Cultural practices play a critical role in mitigating turf stress. Key activities include:

- Maximizing photosynthesis by raising mowing heights and rolling instead of mowing whenever possible. Raising height of cut is particularly helpful when battling take-all root rot – and even slight increases can considerably improve photosynthesis.
- Increasing frequency of sand topdressing. Light and frequent sand topdressing can help dilute thatch and organic matter while raising the effective height of cut.
- Reducing stagnant air by clearing underbrush and removing problematic trees. Stagnant air can cause canopy temperatures to increase considerably during the heat of summer.
- Maintaining adequate and consistent nitrogen fertilization to reduce growth flushes. Excessive nitrogen can cause mower scalping and increased leaf growth at the expense of root growth.
- Reducing thatch and organic matter, if excessive. This will reduce the hydrophobic soil conditions and localized dry spots that result from fairy ring activity. Core aerate and/or needle-tine as needed.
- Minimizing soil saturation through monitoring on a regular basis. Soil TDR probes have taken the guesswork out of the equation.

Focusing on Prevention

Mother Nature can be difficult at times, but a well-structured preventative fungicide program can make an important difference in how well your turf performs. The Bayer Stressgard® portfolio of products has proven particularly helpful when it comes to managing disease and mitigating turf stress.

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Stressgard is a proprietary technology that redefines normal fungicide programs by going beyond disease control to mitigate the full scope of biotic and abiotic stresses across the course. With Stressgard, superintendents can appreciate immediate aesthetic benefits as well as long-lasting improvement in turf quality, color, density and overall health.

Put simply, Stressgard delivers a better, more consistent playing surface – even in conditions you can't predict. And unlike other turf health products on the market, Stressgard isn't dependent on a single active ingredient to deliver results.

With Stressgard, you get the versatility, consistency and satisfaction that you and your golfers expect. Here are just a few of the key benefits of Stressgard:

- Enhanced photosynthesis
- Increased summer turf safety
- Better performance under shade
- Improved spring green-up and early season turf health
- Enhanced tolerance of drought and heat stress
- Improved turf quality under traffic (golfer and mechanical)
- Reduced oxidative stress
- Enhanced turf color both immediately and long-term
- Labeled plant health effects that go beyond disease control



Left: Stressgard Program / Right: Competitive Program

For additional guidance, download the Bayer Golf Solutions Guide (es.bayer.us/golf-solutions-guide), or send me an email at todd.lowe@bayer.com.

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Golf Delegation has Answers TO STATE LEADERS' QUESTIONS

This year's Florida Golf Day was dominated by discussions on fertilizer, water and the Florida GCSA's Best Management Practices certification program. The good news is that legislators and their key staff members were looking for information, not targets. "They had some excellent questions," says Florida GCSA past-president Greg Pheneger. "They wanted facts and science. There was nothing accusatory about their interest."

Pheneger, from John's Island Club in Vero Beach, has attended the vast majority of Florida Golf Days since the annual visit to Tallahassee was instigated more than a decade ago. He says this year's, in early April, was among the most significant.

"We've earned considerable credibility over the years because we keep turning up offering information, and really not asking for much," Pheneger says. "With fertilizer use attracting so much attention across the state, it was heartening to be able to present the science in the context of our BMP program. They were fact-gathering and we had facts."

Golf Day brings together golf industry leaders with leadership and staff key state agencies to discuss golf's economic, environmental and tourism impact on Florida. A key feature of the day is a roundtable that allows golf leaders to educate state policy makers on the benefits of the game, including its \$11-billion annual impact on the Florida economy.

Another important segment of the day came with a reception that was attended by Governor Ron DeSantis. Gov. DeSantis took questions and asked them of the golf industry delegation. "We appreciate the time that the Governor took to come and meet with us," Pheneger says. "Just as we appreciate the time and interest shown by everyone from the various agencies."

In addition to Gov. DeSantis, golf industry leaders also met with Secretary of State Laurel Lee; House majority leader Dane Eagle; Senate majority leader Kathleen Passidomo; Senate president Bill Galvano; Kelly Friend from the Florida Department of Agricultural Environmental Services; Bill Bartnick, environmental administrator, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; and Chris Spencer, policy director, Office of the Governor.



Greg Pheneger spends time with Governor Ron DeSantis at the Golf Day reception.

Among other agencies and offices that golf industry leaders met with were the Florida Sports Foundation, Enterprise Florida Inc., Department of Economic Opportunity, Senate Commerce Committee, Department of State, and Visit Florida.

Golf course superintendents and the Florida GCSA were represented by:

- President, John Curran, John's Island Club
- Executive director, Jennifer Bryan
- Secretary-treasurer, Andy Neiswender, Belleair Country Club
- Parker Ferren, St. Andrews Club
- Joshua Kelley, Hawk's Landing Golf Club
- Greg Pheneger, John's Island Club
- GCSAA director, Kevin Sunderman, Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club
- GCSAA chief executive officer, Rhett Evans
- GCSAA field representative, Ralph Dain
- Will Harrell, Harrell's
- Jason Frank, Harrell's



GCSAA director Kevin Sunderman.



Andy Neiswender, Joshua Kelley, Ralph Dain, John Curran, James Cramer, Greg Pheneger, Parker Ferren, Jennifer Bryan, Kevin Sunderman and Rhett Evans.



Will Harrell of Harrell's.



The entire golf industry delegation with Parker Ferren, front left, and Joshua Kelley, front right.



Listening in on the Golf Day roundtable, Andy Neiswender, CGCS, Jason Frank, John Curran, Parker Ferren and Ralph Dain.



Secretary of State Laurel Lee listens intently as Greg Pheneger, right, makes a point accompanied by Kevin Sunderman, Rhett Evans and Jennifer Bryan.

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Maybe the Labor Market ISN'T THAT TIGHT AFTER ALL

by David Dore-Smith

There is no secret that a shortage of manual labor is creating challenges for golf course superintendents throughout Florida. With unemployment throughout the state average just above three percent, most golf courses have multiple openings on their staff. These vacancies create challenges not only to perform the required morning set up but to also complete the necessary secondary jobs and details that make a difference in the daily presentation of the course.

As we approach the summer months, when in-house projects are planned, vacancies certainly limit what can be achieved in the small window of opportunity during course closures. Vacancies create a burden on existing staff, increase overtime costs, raise issues with using temporary labor companies and frustrate superintendents who know what is possible when fully-staffed.

According to the National Golf Foundation's 2018 Golf Industry Report, women comprise 24 percent of all golfers, an increase of more than 13 percent over the prior five years. In 2016, 34 percent of the 2.5 million new golfers were female.

Clearly, the golf industry has achieved success promoting the participation of women on the playing side. Perhaps it is time for us to recognize the value of adding female employees to our labor pool.

We are extremely fortunate at Copperleaf Golf Club to not only have one, but three female employees working on the golf maintenance team. They are hard to miss as they are routinely seen mov-



Nolie Reyes, Tina Fry and Lena Tovar bring a strong work ethic, attention to detail and can-do attitude to their roles at Copperleaf Golf Club.

ing with a purpose throughout the community.

Tina Fry, one of our assistant superintendents, has been with Copperleaf since December of 2015. Her energy is infectious and her attention to detail second to none. I am always asked by inquisitive members, "Who is that blonde woman working around the golf course? She never stops!" My response, "That's just Tina."

I met Tina 22 years ago when I first arrived in the U.S. as an intern. She was working at Fiddlesticks Country Club in Fort Myers help-

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ing to oversee the Long Mean Golf Course. Her strong work ethic and fun personality was immediately impressive. Tina left Fiddlesticks to be the assistant superintendent at a neighboring course, The Legends, for 16 years before making a change and coming to Copperleaf - and I am glad she did.

She brings new ideas and a passion for wanting to deliver something special to the members. Whether it be new flowers and decorations for ladies' events, making sure the hazard lines are painted before a tournament or inspecting the greens. She simply never stops.

Lena Tovar, an equipment operator, has been with Copperleaf for just over a year. With several open positions within my department, one of my staff asked if I was looking for new employees. "Of course!" was my quick response. He proceeded to describe a person who had no experience on a golf course but was hard-working, dedicated and who spoke both Spanish and English.

"Perfect - who is it?" Turns out, this employee was describing his wife.

And so, Lena came to Copperleaf and has quickly learned many of the tasks required to maintain the high standard expected daily. She can be found raking bunkers, mowing tees and greens and taking care of golf course set up in the early morning and then working on the golf course details in the afternoon. She is a welcome

addition to the team and is quickly growing in confidence.

Nolie Reyes, a spray technician, has been with Copperleaf since September of 2018. She had previous experience, working at Quail West Golf Club in Bonita Springs for 15 years. She left golf maintenance to try a different profession but soon realized that she missed working outside and came to Copperleaf.

Noelia has made an immediate impact with her attention to detail and high expectations. From raking bunkers, spraying plant health products on the greens to operating the front-end loader; Noelia can do it all. She takes great pride in everything she is doing and routinely sends me photos of her work and the beautiful scenery found at Copperleaf.

I am very fortunate to have these wonderful ladies working for Copperleaf. They are always busy and trying to make a positive impact for our members. I encourage all superintendents to consider engaging female employees to build out their teams. At Copperleaf, I have been lucky to find three women with a wonderful work ethic, attention to detail and can-do attitude.

Just as the industry has benefited from encouraging more women to play the game, we have the chance to expand our labor pool by welcoming women into our golf course maintenance operations. ■

- David Dore-Smith is director of golf course and grounds maintenance at Copperleaf Golf Club in Estero.

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So Many Emotional Variables THAT GO ALONG WITH THIS CAREER



At 74, Albert Allen, left, has many of the attributes that still count for a lot to a superintendent like Eddie Snipes at Southwood Golf Club.

As Eddie Snipes says, with as much modesty as understatement, he's "been around a little bit." And, of course, he's seen some things since walking into his first golf job – as a "broke" college kid – at municipal Jacksonville Beach Golf Club in 1974. Now on the cusp of his 66th birthday, Snipes, like a lot of superintendents his age, is spending some time looking back while he contemplates what comes next.

"You want to try and go out on a good note," he says. "Not everyone gets to do that. I remember reading years ago that the average superintendent will work at 3.2 jobs in their career. There's not a lot who get to bring one out of the ground and see it through to where they can hand it over to someone else."

Even though he has spent the last 18 years at Southwood Golf Club in Tallahassee, Snipes exceeds that 3.2 average over his career. From Jacksonville Beach, he became an assistant at San Jose Country Club, where he worked under John Hayden, CGCS. It is Hayden's son, Jeff, who the Seven Rivers GCSA honors each year with its Envirotron Golf Classic.

Snipes became a superintendent at Selva Marina Country Club, now Atlantic Beach Country Club, in 1983. In 1989, he moved to The Oak Bridge Club in Ponte Vedra Beach and later to Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton. Along the way, he spent 29 years with developer Arvida, now St. Joe Towns and Resorts, including his last role for them at Weston Hills Country Club in Ft. Lauderdale.

In all those years, Snipes bore witness as colleagues rode the highs

and lows of the profession, knowing full well that no one is immune. "I might get fired tomorrow. That's the truth of thing," he says. "But I don't think I would have made it as long as I have if I didn't have a strong relationship with my wife, and if my wife didn't understand the business like she does. I've been very fortunate in that respect."

"I know for me, sometimes, I was almost afraid to leave the job at the end of the day."

Snipes has been married 37 years. Like anyone over that length of time, there's a strong chance his wife, Lugene, would learn a lot about the profession simply by osmosis. But she had her own immersion, serving the North Florida GCSA as secretary for a number of years. Including time when Snipes was president, Lugene was in constant contact with members, giving meeting details and collecting dues. So, she heard some stories on her own. Of course, she also heard from her husband.

"Upon reflection, sometimes I was very poor at not bringing the job home," Snipes says. "But I guess when I did bring it home, I would talk openly about it. I would talk about the scenarios I was seeing and my concerns."

That's a lesson worth noting by colleagues, particularly those at the front of their careers. The profession might have come a long way from quick couplers to phone operated pin-point irrigation and the like, but so have expectations. "I know for me, sometimes, I was almost afraid to leave the job at the end of the day," Snipes

says. Even after years of service and earning his stripes, a change in management or club leadership could leave him feeling like he had to prove himself all over again. “You felt like you had to work to, quote, earn the right with the new people.”

As Snipes adds, that aspect was just one of “so many emotional variables that go along with this career.” Talking openly with his wife about those stressors was constructive. So was promoting similar conversations amongst colleagues.

“I remember a certain point back when in I was in my late 30s, early 40s, where we started seeing guys succumb to alcoholism or cancer from smoking,” he says. “Smoking, like drinking, can be a way to relax or wind down. Back in the day, guys would get together and go and play 18 holes then you’d go to a bar somewhere and everybody would get hammered. It was almost kind of expected, and certainly accepted in those days.”

At some point, Snipes and some others in the North Florida GCSA took stock. “It was kind of ridiculous. These were guys who had families at home,” he says. “And we were beginning to see some of those families break up from divorce, really, because of the demands of the job. I remember at the time thinking, ‘Is this going to happen to us? What am I looking at here?’”

Others were asking similar questions.

“So, we started planning things through the superintendents association where we still had golf outings but we took our families with us,” Snipes says. “We had things for the kids to do, we had things for the wives to do, we ate together, the kids played together. The women got to talk with each other about what their husbands were doing.

“We had bowling tournaments for all the families, including the vendors. We tried to build a sense of community where we could help each other get through those things. Because the wives got to know each other, maybe they could reach out and talk about what they were going through when they needed to. They knew other families were probably going through the same things.”

The point is that Snipes identifies relationships, at home, and with colleagues, as critical pillars under the bridge from one end of his career to the other.

“The other thing I do is a lot of praying,” he says. “I’ve told younger guys coming up, ‘Fellas, you’re along for the ride, God grows the grass. Don’t ever think you’re growing the grass. If he wants it to grow, it will grow. Everything you do is supplemental to what he does.’ I’ve often wondered and worried about the guys who don’t have some kind of belief or faith structure. Because that’s when you see a lot of them turning to things that aren’t going to help them and I’ve seen a lot of that. But then, I’ve seen a lot of success stories too.”

As he nears retirement, Snipes wonders how many of those he calls the “unsung heroes of the profession” who are out there at a similar point in their career facing a whole new kind of pressure. “I’m thinking of the average guys, who really don’t have a retirement

package per se, because of the places they’ve worked,” he says “It’s not that they haven’t worked hard. They’ve probably worked harder than most. But at the end of the day, they’re in a survival mode, just trying to get by.”

Snipes makes a valid point when he says much of the focus in golf and on the profession is drawn to the “higher end.” “But that’s not kind of the real world for many superintendents,” he says. “Those guys at the lower-budget courses are kind of the unsung heroes of the profession, because they’re presenting courses where the game can be affordable to everyone. I’m not trying to go down a political road in any way, but that’s just the reality of it. For some, no matter their age, they’ve got to keep working.”

“They’ve got their headsets in and they’ve got their heads down, texting. It’s hard to bring this generation to the point where they realize what matters...”

Some, he points out, do it because they love it, and he might be one of them. They might relinquish the superintendent role but find themselves a facility where they can turn up and simply mow grass. “It’s very possible I might want to drive a tractor when the time comes,” he says. “I know a couple of guys who have done that. They went home and did the ‘honey dos’ for a while, and then they said, ‘You know, I don’t want the headache of the job back. I just want to drive a tractor, I just want to mow greens and go home.’”

The “irony” Snipes says is there is ample opportunity for ageing part-timers like that. Labor supply remains a major issue for the industry, for a host of reasons, one of which, he says, is that many younger people “are not really into the manual labor type thing.” So, if there’s an older worker with some life experience under his belt and he “wants to have him a little pocket change for his grandchildren or whatever, then great.”

Snipes has one such staff member, Albert Allen, who, at 74, will “mow greens, run a sweeper or take out a bush hog.” Allen was never a superintendent but time in the armed services taught him plenty of what’s important. “He’s always in uniform and he’s always on time and he’s an excellent communicator,” Snipes says. “He understands the what the minimum requirement of the job is,” Snipes says. “My perception is that a lot of young folks in this day and time don’t really understand what the minimum requirements are in terms of communication and being on time.

“They’ve got their headsets in and they’ve got their heads down, texting. It’s hard to bring this generation to the point where they realize what matters and that it does matter that you communicate to me what you see out there. Now and then you come across an exception to that, they stand out like a sore thumb.”

All that said, Snipes is far from bitter and twisted on the profession or the younger generation. On the contrary, as he identified, he has seen many success stories and he shares his insights because he sincerely wants to see more. “Of course, I’m just showing my age,” he laughs. “I remember when the transistor radio was going to be the downfall of mankind!” ■

- Trent Bouts

Florida, We “Mite” HAVE A PROBLEM...

by Craig Weyandt

Over the last six months, I have received over a dozen phone calls from different superintendents across the state asking me about bermudagrass stunt mites. While I do not consider myself an expert by any means I have been battling the problem since April, 2013. That’s right... I remember the date.

I first noticed a weak area in the rough around the 15th green at The Moorings Golf Course in Vero Beach, and immediately thought it was mole crickets. After all, we were warming up, it was spring and mole crickets were active. But when I looked closer, I saw this damage was different. I did not notice the characteristic tunneling and mounds of soil that come with mole crickets.

What I did notice was a thinning, yellow and generally weak area of turf. Within a short period of time, the canopy really thinned out and the stunted plants began to show. The damaged turf has leaf blades that are bunched up resembling bonsai trees and is referred to as “witches’ broom.” Although the witches’ broom appearance is an indicator, it is not always apparent where the mites are having an effect.

David Dore-Smith, from Copperleaf Golf Club in Estero, was one of many superintendents that reached out to me describing similar issues on his turf. “I was extremely frustrated, my course was not up to my standards and I didn’t know why,” Dore-Smith told me. He invited several local peers and sales representatives come out in November, 2018 to help diagnose what was affecting the turf. There was an overall appearance of yellowing and generally weak turf throughout the course.

Most of the suggestions referenced nematode damage or a lack of fertility. But Dore-Smith wasn’t convinced that these were the reasons. “My fertility applications were adequate and there was no real improvement to spot treatments of nematicides,” he said. It wasn’t until Zach Lane and Todd Lowe of Bayer Crop Science stopped by that bermudagrass mites were first discussed.

In his previous position as an agronomist with the USGA Green Section, Lowe had traveled the state witnessing all kinds of turf issues. He suggested an application of Triple Crown insecticide along with a penetrant to see if a positive response would occur. Within seven days of that application, the turf began to show signs of life and a green appearance returned.

Dore-Smith also reached out to Jason Frank and Dr. Ray Snyder of Harrell’s to help with positive mite identification. “It turned out I was looking in the wrong spot,” he said. “I was looking at the witches’ broom leaves and not really seeing too much. Dr. Snyder told me to look further down the stolon and closer to the soil and sure enough, there they were.”



This picture is from April 25, 2013 showing Craig Weyandt’s colleague at The Moorings, Scott Campbell, inspecting the first infestation of stunt mites.

Bermudagrass mites are not visible to the naked eye, but a basic microscope will show them easily. They are white, almost translucent in color, and resemble maggots. They hide under leaf sheaths further down on the stolon where they are protected from insecticides.

Since sharing his story, like me, Dore-Smith has received many phone calls and emails from superintendents around the state. “They all want to know what the damage looks like and what I used to control it,” he said. Unfortunately, the answer is not exactly straightforward. Part of the problem, I believe, is that mite issues often have been misdiagnosed over the years as either nematode, disease or drought and treated incorrectly.

“For me, it simply took my stubbornness to be convinced it was something other than nematodes, fertility or disease,” Dore-Smith said. “I sent soil samples for nutrient testing; nematode assays to IFAS and tissue samples for disease analysis. There was never a conclusive – ‘This is what you’ve got, and this is how you treat it.’ But thanks to networking with both superintendents and vendors, I was able to reach out for help and I am glad I did. It was a stressful time for me. Once I knew it was bermudagrass mites I was able to communicate that to my membership and start proactive treatments.”

So, what has been learned? From my own experience and that of Dore-Smith, these pests are very difficult to control. They seem to be most active at temperatures between 70-80 degrees Fahrenheit.

We are not sure if they are not as active in the heat of summer or if the turf is simply out-growing them. Either way, spring and fall seem to be when the most damage is observed.

Damage can best be described as thinning of the turf and can often be in a large circular pattern. Turf does not respond to nutrient applications and secondary issues such as disease and increased nematode damage are more prevalent. The witches' broom effect is an obvious indicator.

Although damage can be observed at all heights, it is most often seen in rough height areas and in particularly in sandy areas such as around bunker faces. All turf varieties can be affected although, anecdotally at least, Celebration bermudagrass seems to be a mite favorite.

The mites can be transported with mowing equipment, golf carts, shoes, animals and even in flooding water or from over irrigation. Dore-Smith has a theory that the mites have become more prevalent after Hurricane Irma in 2017 and that they were transported from the Caribbean Islands and spread throughout Florida.

Todd Lowe says, "The elimination of several insecticides over the past decade may have helped create this problem. Products have become very specific in recent times and so pests that may have been controlled in the past are now making a resurgence."

There are only a few pesticides labeled for the control of bermudagrass stunt mites on turfgrass – with Abemectin, Civitas One, bifenthrin, among them. All applications require the use of a suitable surfactant and high volumes of spray solution to help penetrate into the leaf sheath. Dore-Smith suggests the addition of ammonium sulfate at 10 pounds per acre with the pesticide solution as his research suggests that the sulfur has an antagonistic effect on the mites.

Identifying whether your applications are successful is also a little tricky. With mole crickets you can see the victims, do a soap flush,

etc. But for mites, you are going to have to invest in some type of microscope or lens that will make these pests visible to see if they are dead or still alive. I have spoken to many superintendents that are purchasing a special lens that attaches to a smart phone. The device allows you to see with 10x magnification, which seems adequate for the task.

If possible, start treating at the first signs of infestation. Just spot treat as needed with the theory that they won't spread. Did I mention the short life-cycle? That's right, multiple applications may be needed every seven days but only make applications if you can identify live mites. Product rotation is critical to reduce the possibility of resistance as well. As Lowe says, "Relying on the same technology and mode of action year after year can be dangerous."

Bermudagrass stunt mite incidence appears to be on the rise and that may prompt more attention from researchers. To date though, there seem to be a lot of questions remaining about how to deal with what can be a significant pest. Recent information released by Adam Dale from the University of Florida, can be found at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in1217>. There is also work by Juang Horng "J.C." Chong and Matthew Brown from Clemson University, Clemson available at

<https://www.gcmonline.com/course/environment/news/bermudagrass-mite>.

In the meantime, like Dore-Smith, I encourage superintendents to attend local superintendent meetings to share any experience they have with these pests. Networking and sharing knowledge so that we can all continue to learn from both successes and failures benefits us as superintendents and our facilities. None of us are immune to issues impacting our jobs, whether it be a microscopic mite, a lack of employees or member demands. We all have something to share and learn.

- Craig Weyandt is golf course superintendent at *The Moorings at Hawk's Nest* in Vero Beach and a Florida GCSA director.



An example of the yellowing and witches' broom look of the turf.



Mites under the microscope.

A Quick Q & A With Adam Dale

What is the best time of year to treat? These pests seem to flare up in spring and fall. We see the best control if we make an application in early spring as soon as the witches' broom damage begins to show up. So, monitoring for that damage in early spring is important to ensure to catch it early and prevent an outbreak.

Does time of day make a difference when it comes to application? We have not done any experiments to determine any influence of time of day on efficacy. However, direct sunlight breaks down insecticide residue, so early morning applications will likely give the best control by minimizing exposure to direct sunlight.

What is ideal volume of water with application? We have seen great mite control when putting out about two gallons per 1,000 sq. ft. Keep in mind, the products that work best are traditionally nematicides, which recommend watering in after application. Unlike nematodes, bermudagrass mites are living and feeding within the turf shoots and foliage, so you don't want to irrigate in, especially if you put out two gallons per 1,000. At a lower volume, a light irrigation should be fine.

Are there natural predators that can be purchased or encouraged to grow? We do not know of any specific predatory or parasitic organisms that attack bermudagrass mites. However, there are likely organisms that naturally occur in turf that help regulate mite populations. Our best solution to promoting this natural pest control is using insecticides that are more selective for the target pests and avoiding over-use of broad-spectrum products. For example, we have seen several case studies where broad-spectrum insecticide (e.g., pyrethroids) applications have resulted in greater abundance and damage from other mite species because the broad-spectrum activity killed off their predators.

What mechanical control (scalping, verticutting) should be done to help control and when? We have done some trials to see if scalping the turf can reduce mite abundance and damage. Of course, scalping will reduce the aesthetic value and playability of that area. However, we have seen that scalping alone does reduce damage a fair amount and that scalping immediately prior to applying a pesticide can increase mite control. Scalping the turf should also be done in the spring to minimize stress to the turf and maximize its ability to recover.

What has caused this pest to become a problem over the last few years? We really don't have any good evidence pointing towards a specific cause. These mites have clearly become increasingly problematic over the past five years, but it could be due to a variety of factors. This ranges from environmental conditions (warmer winters, varying rainfall), non-target effects of common pesticides being used, different turf cultivars being planted, or simply that superintendents are more aware and able to correctly diagnose infestations. ■

- Adam Dale is a turfgrass entomology extension specialist at the University of Florida.



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Fact or Fiction: IS LAWN FERTILIZER FEEDING RED TIDE

by Matt Taylor, CGCS

Florida GCSA past-president Matt Taylor, CGCS prepared the following analysis of the debate over fertilizer impacts on red tide for his members at Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples. An electronic version is available for download at the www.floridagcsa.com. Taylor says members are free to use the document in efforts to inform their golfers and members.

After the red tide outbreak Southwest Florida experienced during the summer of 2018, many people, including members of the news media, pointed the finger at nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizer runoff and leaching as the source of the problem. Concerned citizens spoke during the public comment portion of a recent fertilizer ordinance workshop held by Collier County, and all shared the same opinion. Their solution: ban fertilizer use in Collier County and the City of Naples during the summer months.

Many counties in Florida have bans on the application of nitrogen and phosphorus from June through September - our rainy months. Those municipalities claim that banning fertilizer applications at that time of the year will reduce or eliminate pollution from fertilizer running off and leaching. This ignores the findings of peer-reviewed scientific studies.

History Speaks for Itself

Before we get too deep into this conversation, let's look at the history of red tide and current laws regulating fertilizer use. Red tide is a naturally occurring living organism, and outbreaks have been documented as far back as the 1840s, long before the coastlines of Florida were populated. The red tide that is so devastating to our coast is *Karenia brevis*, also referred to as *K. brevis*. Red tide first develops 10 to 40 miles offshore, and there is no direct link between nutrient pollution and the frequency or initiation of red tides caused by *K. brevis*.

However, once *K. brevis* reaches our coastlines, it can draw on nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, for growth. It is important to note that nutrients can originate from both natural and human (anthropogenic) activities. The amount of nutrients in a water body is a complex issue and dependent on a host of factors.

Collier County, including the City of Naples, has adopted the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Model Ordinance for Florida-Friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes. This Model Ordinance does not include a summertime blackout period because results from an eight-year, \$4.2-million FDEP study showed blackout periods during summer months are not needed.



Matt Taylor, CGCS

One key feature of the Model Ordinance is the law regulating commercial (for-hire) applicators that fertilize lawns in our state. Beginning in January 2014, professionals are required under Chapter 482.1562 of Florida Statutes to be certified in the Green Industries Best Management Practices to protect Florida's natural resources from non-point pollution (i.e., fertilizer application).

It is important to note that the business itself is not certified, rather the actual person pushing the fertilizer spreader must be certified. The applicator must sit a six-hour class and pass a practical exam before legally applying fertilizer in Collier County and the state of Florida. Additionally, that certification must be renewed every four years through continuing education. That professional must also maintain a Limited Certificate for Urban Landscape Commercial Fertilizer Application from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - an applicator's license similar to a pesti-

cide applicator's license.

A recent survey conducted by Collier County Pollution Control found that 80 percent of county homeowners used a contractor to manage their lawn. In Collier County, we have more than 2,500 certified applicators who follow state laws regarding fertilizer applications on home and commercial lawns. Statewide in Florida, we have over 48,000 that comply.

My point here is that fertilizer, and its use, is regulated and monitored in Collier County and other parts of Florida. Moreover, these laws were shaped by peer-reviewed scientific studies funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, not industry or special-interest groups.

For the most part, golf courses have been exempted from these fertilizer bans and more restrictive ordinances. We are seen as professionals because many golf course superintendents have degrees in turfgrass science, and we have our own set of Best Management Practices, developed by FDEP, University of Florida, USGA and the industry. Florida is also the only state in the nation that has a Golf Course BMP Certification Program.

Examining the Facts

So, what is the truth? Is lawn and ornamental fertilizer contributing to red tide? Many would say, "with as bad as the red tide was last year, all the dead fish and everyone in the media blaming all this on fertilizers, how could someone possibly think otherwise?"

In my professional opinion, nitrogen and phosphorus from lawn and ornamental fertilizers are not the problem. However, this is just my opinion. The problem is large and complex, and the solution must be based on scientific, peer-reviewed research, not something that makes us feel better or fits an agenda.

Here is what I do know, and this is based on more than 35 years of experience in Southwest Florida managing turfgrass and landscapes, my degree in golf course operations, being a certified golf course superintendent since 2005, being certified as an instructor in Green Industries Best Management Practices, certified in Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Water Quality on Florida Golf Courses, a certified Commercial Pest Control Operator in Lawn and Ornamental, having a private applicator's license in lawn and ornamentals, and having sat through hundreds of hours of continuing education classes:

When turfgrass is properly maintained and Best Management Practices are followed, which include the rate of fertilizer application and timing of fertilizer application, the likelihood of nitrogen and phosphorus leaching or running off turf are negligible.

Here are some of the reasons I believe this to be true:

From 2004 through 2012, FDEP funded a \$4.2-million study focused on fertilizer leaching. The University of Florida performed this research at three locations: Milton, Gainesville and Fort Lauderdale. The results from this research helped UF improve recommended fertilizer rates and timing, which are reflected in the Green Industries Best Management Practices. The results of the

research conclusively demonstrated that when fertilizer is applied at the correct rate and correct timing, nitrogen and phosphorus did not leach in significant quantities. Much of the applied fertilizer is quickly taken up by the turf and used for growth.

Proponents of summertime blackouts speak about runoff and leaching of nitrogen and phosphorus during our afternoon thunderstorms. Runoff is when water "runs off" a site following a heavy rain event, and leaching is when water moves down through the soil.

Turfgrass has many well-documented benefits, and one of those benefits is that the thick, dense turf with its fibrous root system greatly reduces both run-off and leaching. If you have ever walked on our lawns in South Florida, you know how thick and dense they are. A dense, healthy turf is key to filtering pollutants from our water. When turf is not provided proper nutrition, it will thin out, actually leading to a potential increase in nutrient leaching and runoff.

Over the past 10 years or so, most fertilizer blends in Florida have been phosphorus free or contain minimal amounts (the law limits it two percent or less). Some of the world's largest phosphate mines are in central Florida, and most Florida soils contain adequate levels of phosphorus. Generally, one of the only times turf needs additional phosphorus is during establishment. FDEP's study confirmed this, and fertilizer recommendations across the state reflect this.

So, What is the Cause?

If the problem is not primarily coming from a fertilizer bag, where else could it come from and why are those sources not getting attention? Could it be that the quickest, easiest "solution" - so that everyone feels better - is to ban fertilizer? The issues identified following are not quick fixes, they are involved, and most will be expensive to solve. Let's briefly look at the situation in Southwest Florida.

During late summer 2017, Hurricane Irma caused extensive damage to structures and landscapes. It turned the Gulf of Mexico and our estuaries upside down with extreme tides and heavy seas, turning over years of sediment and making those nutrients available to aggravate the naturally existing red tide. A similar spike in the severity of red tide was observed after Hurricane Wilma in 2005.

Urban development over the past 10 years has been staggering. The stormwater from those roofs, streets and parking lots go into the stormwater system, much of it draining to the Gulf of Mexico or other water bodies. Before the development, rainwater would filter naturally into the aquifer. Rainfall does contain small amounts of nitrogen and, when combined with leaf litter in parking lots and grass clippings not blown off streets or sidewalks, you have nitrogen and phosphorus in the stormwater, all sources of nutrients that did not come from a fertilizer bag.

Septic systems are also an area of concern. An estimated 2.6 million exist in Florida, which is 12 percent of the entire country's septic systems. For example, Captiva Island, which is north of Sanibel Is-

land, has an estimated 526 septic systems. In many parts of Collier, Goodland and Lee counties large quantities of septic systems used for residential neighborhoods exist. Across from Royal Poinciana, there are approximately 900 septic systems in the City of Naples slated for connection to the city's sewer lines.

Although septic systems are efficient at removing biological waste (i.e., fecal coliform), conventional septic systems are not designed for removing nutrients – only removing about one-third of the total nitrogen input. Ageing or poorly maintained septic systems have the potential to leak, either into the aquifer as water tables rise or into the stormwater system. In some coastal areas, these septic-system drain fields are right on waterbodies, yielding another source for nitrogen and phosphorus that did not come from a fertilizer bag.

Freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee River ultimately end up in the Gulf of Mexico or on the East Coast during our summer months, which disrupts the natural ecosystems on our coastline.

Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and Lee counties have summertime blackout periods, and there is zero credible evidence to suggest the bans have helped curtail red tide. A study funded by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program reported in 2015 that at least seven years of monitoring would be necessary to observe any statistically significant effects of fertilizer bans on local water quality. Long-term monitoring efforts have yet to be initiated.

Summertime blackout periods may have unintended consequences. Many may feel that if they cannot fertilize for four months during the summer months, they will just “load up” with one large fertilizer application in late May. Fertilizer labels prescribe maximum application rates at any one time for a reason: research shows that going above those rates could lead to leaching and runoff.

Turfgrass and other plants need nutrients, including nitrogen and phosphorus, to remain healthy. By starving the plant during periods of active growth (e.g., summertime), it will eventually lead to weaker plants, increasing the likelihood of insect, disease and weed pressure. This, in turn, could lead to more inputs being needed to keep the plant healthy. In addition, weaker plants will result in less healthy root systems that are not able to take up nutrients. Thin, weak grass stands are not able to reduce soil erosion.

This is not the first time Collier County has looked at blackout periods or summer bans for

nitrogen and phosphorus. In 2011, Everglades GCSA members, along with professors from the University of Florida and others, attended countless meetings with Collier County to offer a science-based viewpoint. When it came time for the Collier County Commissioners to vote, they chose to stick to the science and approved the State Model Ordinance with no summertime blackout period.

During months of meetings, we were asked several times why the golf courses would be against such an ordinance that would exempt them. The answers are simple. First, we are confident that these blackout periods will not work and have not worked in other counties. When they don't work, special-interest groups will come back to the municipalities and claim that it is not working because there is not a total ban. They would then use that to argue the need to include golf courses in the ban.

Secondly, the bans do effect golf courses and their communities. While the golf course itself is exempted, our club grounds, common grounds and entrances are not exempt from the summertime bans on the use of nitrogen and phosphorus.

Lastly, and most importantly, summer blackout periods and bans are just not logical or based on anything other than emotional responses to a situation that does not produce the intended results. We currently have fertilizer laws and regulations in place to protect Florida's natural resources, including protecting and improving water quality. These laws and rules are based on peer-reviewed scientific studies, to reduce or eliminate non-point source pollution. Each segment of agriculture has BMPs in place to protect water quality in our state. Sod growers, traditional farming, golf courses, the green industry and landscape nurseries all use BMPs.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this and hopefully you now understand there is another side to the story. ■

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Fishing Challenge Winners DELIVER WITH FINE CATCHES

The winners are in for the first annual Florida GCSA State-wide Fishing Challenge presented in collaboration with the South Florida GCSA. Some excellent fish were landed in fresh and salt waters. To enter, anglers had to deliver a photo of them with their fish and a recent copy of *The Florida Green*.

In that respect, the winning entry from Larry Balko, of Florida Superior Sand and a member of the Palm Beach GCSAS, deserves special mention. With his hands full lifting two wahoo – at 26lbs and 23lbs – he took the magazine in his mouth, and still managed a smile. His fish were caught out of the Boynton Beach inlet.

Other winners include Chris McRae, of Beard Equipment Company and a member of the North Florida GCSA, whose snook caught in Suwanee measured 32.5 inches.

Florida GCSA past-president Ricky Reeves, of Miami Beach Golf Club and a member of the South Florida GCSA, landed a 3.5lb peacock bass in a canal. Reeves also won in the category with the most different species, sending in pictures of a snook and a largemouth bass.

Fellow South Florida GCSA member Jason Bailey, of Parkland Golf and Country Club, reeled in a 6.5lb largemouth bass at Holiday Park. Bailey was the lead instigator of the competition that he hopes will grow in popularity and participation over time.

“Yeah, this first year was a little slow,” he says. “But hopefully it can gain steam. So many superintendents love to fish. I think we all get a kick out of seeing who catches what when some of the chapters have their own fishing challenges. It’s just a matter of guys taking a minute to send in a photo or two, and we could have a great gallery of images at the end of every year.”

Winners will receive their prizes - Columbia fishing shirts sporting the Florida GCSA logo - in the next few weeks. ■



Larry Balko with a pair of wahoo at a combined weight just shy of 50lb.



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Chris McRae's snook taken in Suwanee measured 32.5 inches.



Ricky Reeves with a healthy peacock bass.



Jason Bailey and his 6.5lb largemouth bass.



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Back in the day ... the technology was different but the essential elements of being a good superintendent are timeless.



Was Back in the Day REALLY THAT DIFFERENT

by Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

Riding around on a sun-filled morning on the golf course I find myself reflecting, “Back in the day, there wasn’t a cell phone in my pocket, the greens mowers didn’t have power steering and I certainly couldn’t control my irrigation system with a tablet computer. I surely didn’t worry about rolling my greens every day and as crazy as it sounds ... there was always a stack of applications in the file drawer with people wanting to work and just waiting on a call.”

The truth is “Back in the day” wasn’t all that long ago.

In my world, “Back in the day” was only 25 years ago but superintendents have been doing the work for a lot longer than that! So, I find myself thinking about those that came before us and have moved on or, sadly, passed away. I wonder how it would feel for them to fall right behind my desk tomorrow with an owner, GM or committee chair in front of them handing over the



The faces may have changed but today's superintendents still have much in common with yesteryear's greenkeepers.

reins to the operation.

Of course, it’s impossible to make that happen, but recently a good friend of mine came by the office and I sure wanted to put him in my chair for a day. He often stops in to raid the ice machine or just bust our stones for a bit. This time by, maybe the season-ending events had me tired out or I just needed an escape for an hour, but all I know is that it was one of those opportunities to learn, to listen and to take the time to acknowledge this veteran of the industry.

Like many superintendents and golf pros alike, he grew up on a golf course. Fishing was more rewarding to him than golf, but a love of the golf course evolved and a job on that course was in store when his teen years arrived. A mentor (we’ve all had one we should thank by the way) took him under his wing and recommended Penn State’s turf school following his high school days if he was serious about this line of work.

Seems as though he figured that was a good move. So, he made the trek to state college, graduating in 1965, nearly a decade after the program began, and entered into the growing world of golf course management. He swears that they weren't using horse drawn pull frames at that time but was certain that at the first course he helped manage there was a staff member that had in fact used the original horsepower ... wow!

Following a short term as an assistant, he quickly landed that first superintendent spot which stuck for 13 years. While there, he became a certified golf course superintendent during the second year that certification was available. Proving himself year after year gave him the next opportunity to manage a club that was, is and will always be a highly-regarded club in the Mid-Atlantic. He spent another 13 years at that club, hosting seven PGA Tour events and becoming a leader in our industry without question. After nearly 30 years, he hung up the soil probe and had the opportunity to become one of those "snowbirds" and join us here at The Sanctuary, just about the time I arrived in 1993.

Today however, he's just out here with a goofy looking hat on hacking at my fairways and enjoying not being in that chair. He has guaranteed me that I'll never be sitting across from him at a committee meeting and that he is the self-proclaimed biggest fan of mine and the staff that work away out here each day. He's still a GCSAA member and shoots me information from time to time in such a way to keep me on my toes.

So, here is, just shooting the bull and I just have to ask ... "What do you miss the most?" "Simple," he says. "I miss the relationships with my peers, my members and my staff. Those were the things that made me want to come to work each day and those were the things that lasted long after the job was done." Okay, agreed. I get that. Let's keep going here ...

"What's your best memory?" As you can picture, the head rolls back and he looks to the ceiling, "Mentoring those guys that went on to be successful in this industry. That had careers that they could be proud of and that I'd hear from now again or see them in a magazine. Oh, that and standing beside the 18th when Fred Couples won his first PGA Tour event and his girlfriend jumped him on the 18th green. It was awesome."

With that answer, I have to say that I'm getting to like this guy more and more. I'm still going here ... "What's so different about what you did and what I do each day?"

"Technology makes your job much different and member relations is not what it was in my day. Screen time took the place of face-to-face time and superintendents aren't out there as much with their members. I never see you playing golf with the members. Often, superintendents and their families would have full access to the club and built lifelong relationships with the membership. Lunch at the clubhouse was the norm, not a rarity. Outreach to the community was promoted. Maybe superintendents are just too busy for that today."

You know, I don't know. I think we're all busier, but I also know it's good to hear that.

Lastly, "What was the secret to your success?" This answer didn't take long. "My equipment manager at both my jobs were key factors in my success. We were on the cutting edge of equipment trials and, just overall, you know how important that role is. Building a strong staff was huge and of course, those member relations were key too. Opening up yourself to those you work for and showing that you're a real person and have a decent golf game and can put a sentence together in conversation was pretty important."

With that, I hear a convoy of vehicles rolling in and can tell that lunchtime is here. "Now, what are you here for again," I ask. "Oh, just wanted to stop in and tell your Sunday pin positions were insane ... someone should be punished. Haha ... have a good rest of your day!"

"Back in the day" is 50 years ago for him, and what a different day it was, but is it really? We still need to have a great equipment manager, we love being mentors, we value our relationships with our peers and members, and we know without a doubt that screen time cannot take the place of face-to-face time. Time changes a lot, but not these essential elements of being a good superintendent. ■

- Kyle Sweet is certified golf course superintendent at The Sanctuary Golf Club in Sanibel

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IN THE NEWS

Excerpts from press coverage on people in the world of golf course maintenance in Florida.

Kyle Beebe, Indian Springs Golf Club

Panama City News Herald • March 13

The Indian Springs Golf Club course in Marianna will reopen March 21. Like other courses in the Florida Panhandle, it sustained damage from Hurricane Michael. Owner and superintendent Kyle Beebe, Beebe's parents Rod Beebe and Donna Beebe and employee Donnie Bradley have cleaned up the course to get it ready for the reopening. "We had over 4,000 trees on the ground and a lot more than needed to be taken off," said Beebe. "(Bradley) has been unbelievable. I can't thank him enough."

Scott MacPhee, Sailfish Point Golf Club

Kyle Sweet, CGCS, Sanctuary Golf Club

New York Times • March 9

Minimizing manicured grass isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think of improvements to a high-end golf course. But Sailfish Point Golf Club on Hutchinson Island on Florida's east coast, did just that. Now, butterflies have moved in where native grasses and flowers have been allowed to grow tall ... Scott MacPhee, the director of golf course operations at Sailfish Point, said ... "A lot of fingers could easily be pointed at

our community and our operation, and I didn't want that for our members ... ultimately, we all want to do the right thing and we all want clean water."

Across the state, on Sanibel Island, the Sanctuary Golf Club ripped out concrete cart paths and brought in beehives to help pollinate the local wildflowers ... The community and its course, which has been certified by Audubon International, are surrounded by the 6,300-acre J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge — home to more than 300 species of birds, 50 species of reptiles and more than 30 mammal species. Two-thirds of the island is protected land. "If you're going to be buying real estate on Sanibel Island, you've already bought into the environmental side of things and you probably already get it," said Kyle Sweet, the superintendent at the Sanctuary Golf Club ...

Darren Davis, CGCS, Olde Florida Golf Club

Naples Daily News • February 26

Darren J. Davis, the golf course superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, completed his term as the 82nd president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America on February 7 at the association's annual meeting in San Diego.



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Davis will serve on the board as immediate past president until the 2020 annual meeting. Davis, a certified golf course superintendent (CGCS), has been a member of the association's board of directors since 2012.

A 29-year member of GCSAA, Davis is a past-president of the Everglades GCSA and a past-president of the Florida GCSA and Florida Turfgrass Association. He is currently a director with the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation. In 2004, the Florida GCSA honored him with its Distinguished Service Award, and in 2011 the FTGA presented Davis with the Wreath of Grass - the association's highest award.

Alan Brown, Timuquana Country Club
Ponte Vedra Recorder • February 28

It was a full house at the San Jose Country Club on Tuesday, February 19, when a crowd of 250 people attended the seventh annual "Celebration of Golf Banquet" to honor Elizabeth "Anne" P. Nimnicht, who received the Deane Beman Award, and numerous other 2018 winners and award recipients. Nimnicht holds the distinction of being the only person to chair events on the three main tours of the PGA Tour - the PGA Tour, PGA Tour Champions and the Web.com Tour.

Longtime First Coast resident, Nease High School graduate

and two-time PGA Tour winner Len Mattiace was the evening's guest speaker ... Timuquana Country Club superintendent Alan Brown was called on to reflect on the activities and 2018 highlights of the North Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Jeremiah Lockhart, PGA National
CBS12News • February 20

The Honda Classic tees off next Thursday, and some of the brightest PGA stars will be experiencing shiny new greens at PGA National. Those already in town are getting to know those greens this week. Jupiter resident Morgan Hoffman was teeing off on the Champions Course at PGA National on Wednesday, along with Anirban Lahiri from India.

Both of them were trying to get an early feel for one of the most challenging courses on the PGA Tour. You can never get enough practice in the Bear Trap, but it's also important to get an early feel for the new greens.

"The fullness of the greens being brand new is something that they'll have to get used to," says PGA National course superintendent Jeremiah Lockhart. "The speed will be there, so the biggest thing for them is to keep that firmness in check." ■

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Golf “Delivers” at First Florida Turfgrass Day

Members of a small group representing golf during a turfgrass industry visit to Tallahassee in March are taking credit for helping with the arrival of Harry Boyd Wilder. Harry was born the day after his mother, Erin Wilder, of Sod Solutions, and others walked miles, climbed stairs and shook a lot of hands on behalf of the golf and turfgrass industries. “We kept joking with Erin that all the exercise would have an impact, and it did,” Florida GCSA executive director Jennifer Bryan says. “We are thrilled for her and Harry’s arrival was really icing on the cake from what was a very worthwhile visit to Tallahassee.”



Harry Boyd Wilder, born March 20 weighing 6lb 9oz and measuring 19 inches.

Organized by Harrell’s and Southern Strategy Group, the industry visit aimed to create dialogue with lawmakers and regulators, opening the door for future conversations as they may be needed and to offer stakeholder expertise. A major topic of conversation was whether golf could become classified as urban agriculture,

a move that would exempt the industry from county fertilizer blackout ordinances.

“We believe that our BMP program provides an excellent basis for lawmakers to make the resolutions necessary to move golf under an urban agriculture heading,” Bryan says. “Traditional agriculture is exempt because it is accepted that growers follow established industry BMPs. I have to say our meeting with folks from the Department of Agriculture was very encouraging. They were very interested in what we had to say.”

The industry group also met with Senate president Sen. Bill Galvano (R-21), who has family ties to golf. His father is honored each year with Manatee County’s two-day Phil Galvano Classic Golf Tournament, and five siblings are all pros.

Jeff Plotts Honored at Celebration of Golf

Jeff Plotts from TPC Sawgrass was honored as Superintendent of the Year at the seventh annual Celebration of Golf Banquet in Jacksonville. The banquet is co-sponsored by the Jacksonville Area Golf Association and the Northern Chapter of the North Florida PGA, and supported by the Jacksonville Women’s Golf Association, The First Tee of North Florida and the North Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association. More than 250 people attended the event at San Jose Country Club in February.

Plotts is director of golf course maintenance operations at TPC Sawgrass which hosts The Players Championship. This year, Plotts successfully negotiated the tournament’s return to a March date from a regular May fixture. That meant that instead of playing on bermudagrass in the early part of the growing season, the world’s best players were greeted with a fully- overseeded golf course.

Nelson Makes Move To St. Andrews

Brad Nelson has joined St. Andrews Country Club in Boca Raton as director of course and grounds. A 22-year veteran in the golf industry, Nelson joins St. Andrews from PGA National Resort and Spa in Palm Beach, where he served as director of agronomy responsible for conditions for the 2016 to 2018 Honda Classics. He led golf course maintenance efforts for 2013 to 2015 WGC Cadillac Championships while at Trump National Doral.

“When you have the reputation that St. Andrews Country Club has, of being such a distinguished club, the best of the best, there is never any doubt what the standard is for the property,” Nelson says. “I’m committed to providing a stellar member experience by highlighting the diversity of the two golf courses which is quite unique. The Fazio II golf course is truly a championship test of golf since the renovation, with a strategic approach to shot making and an emphasis on firm, fast conditioning, while the Palmer golf course offers a more traditional approach to the game in regards to sight lines and green contouring.”



Members of the delegation that visited Tallahassee for the first Florida Turfgrass Day at the Capitol: Jason Frank, Harrell’s; Andy Jorgensen, CGCS, On Top of the World; Erin Wilder, Sod Solutions; Will Harrell, Harrell’s; Mac Carraway, EREF; Dr. Eric Brown, Heather Russo, Florida Turfgrass Association; Jennifer Bryan, Florida GCSA; Dr. Bryan Unruh, University of Florida.



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Golf Honors Williams At South Florida Expo

The Florida GCSA recognized Karen Williams in March for more than 30 years of service to golf course superintendents through her work at the annual South Florida Turfgrass Field Day and Expo. A biologist on the technical support staff at UF/IFAS, Williams received a plaque honoring her “outstanding service” from South Florida GCSA president Jason Bailey from Parkland Golf and Country Club. The presentation came during the 31st annual South Florida Turfgrass Expo in Davie.

The day-long event featured a series of stations and talks by various researchers and staff members at UF/IFAS. Attendees split into two groups, those from golf course and athletic field management, and those from landscape management. Topics covered on the day included everything from disease management on warm-season turfgrasses, turfgrass field trials, pest management, pesticide safety, pollinator programs, and the Florida GCSA’s pioneering BMP program.enhanced recruitment efforts and a better member experience.”



UF’s Dr. Bryan Unruh, with Karen Williams, her plaque and South Florida GCSA president Jason Bailey.



Dr. Unruh and Dr. Phil Busey.



South Florida GCSA secretary Lissa Donald-Minus and president Jason Bailey.

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Dr. Kevin Kenworthy greets attendees to his zoysiagrass and bermudagrass cultivar field trials.

Company Ceases Glyphosate Sales After Insurers Balk

Harrell's decision to stop selling products containing glyphosate raised some eyebrows but didn't shock industry observers aware of recent litigation against Monsanto. Last year, a California jury awarded \$289 million to a school groundskeeper who contracted non-Hodgkin's lymphoma after using Roundup. A superior court judge later reduced that figure to \$78.5 million but the verdict against Monsanto stands. In March, a Federal court ruled that Roundup was a substantial factor in causing another California man's cancer.

As a result of the first decision and other pending lawsuits, insurers that Harrell's previously used are refusing to cover glyphosate-related claims. To date, no other suppliers have followed suit but Mac Carraway, executive director of the Environmental Research and Education Foundation, says it is reasonable to wonder how long that will be the case. "It wouldn't surprise to see it happen more often," he says. "Setting aside the scientific merits, which will be heard and reheard as various actions are litigated, the weight of public opinion and reaction may be hard to overcome."

As one law firm wrote after last year's verdict against Monsanto: "Without a doubt, like all other mass tort litigation (asbestos, environmental, toxic tort), the issues raised by current and inevitable future glyphosate lawsuits present overwhelming exposures for policyholders, insurers and reinsurers..."

Harrell's chief executive officer Jack Harrell, Jr. explained his company's decision in a statement: "First, Harrell's is not making any judgment as to whether glyphosate is detrimental to anyone's health. In fact, the weight of scientific evidence strongly supports its safety when used properly. That said, during our annual insurance renewal last month, we were surprised to learn that our insurance company was no longer willing to provide coverage for claims related to glyphosate due to the recent high-profile lawsuit and the many thousands of lawsuits since.

"We sought coverage from other companies but could not buy adequate coverage for the risk we would be incurring. So, we had no choice other than to notify our Harrell's Team and customers that we would no longer offer products containing glyphosate as of March 1, 2019."

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Textron Announces New Sales Regions in Florida

Textron Specialized Vehicles, announces the expansion of sales-and-service regions in Florida for several authorized distributors of Jacobsen professional turf equipment. These expansions are among a number across the country for the company.

Tri-State Pump and Control will expand its region to cover northern Florida and Georgia. TSP has been in professional turf and irrigation equipment for 25 years, and an exclusive distributor for Jacobsen equipment for 10 years in South Carolina.

Joe Blair Garden Supply will handle sales and service of Jacobsen equipment to golf facilities in southern Florida. Joe Blair Garden Supply has been a fixture in Southern Florida for more than 75 years, offering a range of equipment, including Jacobsen, focused on the professional turf industry.

Tropicars Golf and Utility Vehicles will service customers in north-central Florida. Tropicars is an authorized Jacobsen distributor covering the Caribbean, central and South America.

“The updated regions enable us to optimize and strengthen our ability to support the sales and service of Jacobsen equipment to

golf and turf facilities across the United States,” says Michael R. Parkhurst, vice-president, Golf and Turf at Textron Specialized Vehicles, which designs and manufactures Jacobsen products.

Pat Jones Joins Harrell's As Experience Director

Florida-based Harrell's has appointed leading industry communicator and commentator, Pat Jones, to a new position of customer experience director. Jones joins Harrell's with over 30 years of experience in the turf-grass industry. For the past decade Jones has served as publisher and editorial director of Golf Course Industry magazine, the leading independent publication in the market.



Jones is a prolific writer, blogger and social media commentator and a frequent presenter at regional, national and international turf conferences. He began his career in the industry in 1987 on staff at GCSAA headquarters,

where he oversaw communications, fundraising and lobbying through the mid-1990s. Most recently he was with GIE Media and, in addition to leading Golf Course Industry magazine, also oversaw Lawn & Landscape magazine for several years.

As customer experience director, Jones will help with the strategic growth of the Harrell's brand in existing regions and as they continue expansion throughout the country. “After nearly 15 years with GIE Media, I started thinking about what I would do in the final chapter of my crazy career,” Jones says. “I’ve always admired and respected the Harrell's family and the culture they’ve created so the opportunity to be part of their company is a dream come true.”

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— John Murtaugh VP of Water Products —

Old Collier Tour Leads to New Perceptions on Golf

When it comes to promoting the positive environmental impacts that golf courses provide, there is no better theater than the facility at The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples. I recently had the opportunity to participate in the EPA Regulators' Tour at Old Collier with representatives from our industry and 30 individuals from multiple offices in the EPA.

Todd Draffen, director of golf course operations, led the annual event with the support of Todd Lowe, now with Bayer; Brian Beckner, of Native Bird Boxes; David Dore-Smith, superintendent at Copperleaf Golf Club; and me.

The day was perfect as the bus unloaded with a swarm of EPA officials anxious to see what the facility had to offer. Quite honestly, so was I. I had been on property last year for this event and remembered how magnificent everything was and anticipated the splendor again. I quickly realized that the group was not going to be disappointed.

We broke into two smaller, manageable groups and started with a tour of the maintenance facility. As we stopped in every major area, it was easy to see that every aspect was impeccably maintained. Our first stop was the irrigation room as Todd Draffen led our group and explained tools such as soil moisture meters, computer systems and how the technology worked in tandem to minimize the amount of water used on the course. Attendees from the EPA were fascinated by the equipment and ability to deliver water with pinpoint accuracy on the golf course.

After perusing the turf equipment, which looked like it had just been delivered from the showroom, we toured the materials storage area, fertilizer storage area and pesticide mix and load areas. I anticipated some pointed comments and questions, but because everything was so immaculate and properly maintained, most questions and comments were of a positive nature. We completed our maintenance building tour in the equipment repair area with conditions so tidy you felt like you could eat your lunch off any surface.

When we moved out on to the golf course, Todd Draffen addressed the entire group, making a point of discussing the selection of Paspalum for grassing the course to allow for lower quality water to be used for irrigation. My words cannot convey how spectacular every feature of the golf course is at Old Collier.

As we continued around the course, the EPA officials observed an eagle in flight while fledglings nested above. At another stop, a huge osprey nest was being maintained. We also had the opportunity to observe gopher tortoise habitat. Those few minutes provided a powerful snapshot of the way the golf course stands within an urban environment and exemplified how well it can provide valuable greenspace and habitat for wildlife.



Todd Draffen, arm raised on the right, addresses EPA regulators during a tour of The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples.

We also observed an instance of mole cricket damage in the middle of a fairway. It was one small blemish but demonstrated how disruptive this pest can be and why superintendents need appropriate tools to combat them.

The tour concluded with a demonstration of a POGO moisture meter on the 18th green. Attendees were impressed by how detailed the information was and how it was portrayed on the accompanying app used by both Todd and David Dore-Smith at their golf courses. I was able to discuss how innovations such as moisture meters, improvements in irrigation delivery systems and other management practices help superintendents use 22 percent less water, nationally, than they did 10 years ago. In the Southeast, that figure is almost 40 percent.

That information comes from the Golf Course Environmental Profile Survey administered by GCSAA. I want to offer a quick thank you to every superintendent who has participated in those surveys over the years. If you had seen the impact of being able to report that data to the folks on the tour, you would know that your time and effort had been worthwhile.

Driving home, I reflected on the day and felt a great sense of pride to work in an industry that truly practices such care for the environment and employs some of the best stewards of the land. I still have an image in my head of several EPA regulators stroking the grass in the fairways and on the greens trying to determine if it was real or not. As you know, and now so do they, it is very real and a great testament to the efforts of superintendents who maintain these premier conditions with the greatest respect for the environment. ■

- Ralph Dain is GCSAA regional representative in Florida. You can reach him at (785) 424-4306 or rdain@gcsaa.org.

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