

Tee to Green

South Texas Chapter
GCSAA
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

January/February
2009

Out of Bounds: **Alligators can be water hazards!**

By Dr. Anthony Camerino

If you are a member of the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association, you most likely live and work within the range of the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*).

In Texas, these large reptiles can potentially be found in marshes, lakes, wetlands, and reservoirs east of Interstate 35 to the Louisiana/Arkansas/Oklahoma borders. It is not unusual to see them navigating the bayous and drainage ditches of southeast Texas, or the ponds that dot our golf courses.

Male alligators can ultimately reach 11 feet in length and females can reach 8 feet in length (the longest recorded length for an alligator is 19 feet, 2 inches, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department).

Alligators less than 3 feet long consume spiders, insects, crawfish, shrimp, minnows, and crabs. Larger alligators will consume the previously mentioned as well as fish, turtles, wading birds, waterfowl, muskrats, nutria, otters, raccoons, alligators, hogs, and deer. Hunting typically starts at dusk and continues throughout the night.

Alligators court and mate from late spring through early summer. After mating the female will build a nest at some time within the following two months and then lay her eggs. The eggs usually hatch from late August or early September. Needless to say, alligators can be especially dangerous when they are guarding their eggs or young.

BE GATOR SAFE!

- DON'T* feed alligators.
- DON'T* get too close to them.
- DON'T* swim or wade where they are.
- DON'T* let your pets near them.
- DON'T* agitate or tease them.
- DON'T* try to catch one.
- DON'T* approach an alligator's nest.
- DO* observe from a safe distance.
- DO* discourage others from feeding them.
- DO* treat them with respect as an important element of nature.

DO get additional information about alligators from your local Texas Parks and Wildlife Department office.

Alligators are regulated by the State of Texas. Feeding a free-range alligator is illegal, because feeding will habituate the animal to humans and that can lead to dangerous encounters. Put another way, feeding alligators causes them to lose their fear of people and teaches them to associate food with people. That's not good.

A person may legally kill an alligator without a license in "immediate defense of his or her life or the lives of others or to protect the livestock or other domestic animals from imminent injury or death." If an alligator is killed for those reasons, a report must be made to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department immediately.

If you have a nuisance alligator on your golf course, you must work with Texas Parks and Wildlife or your local game warden to have the alligator removed. They or a control hunter contracted by the agency will remove the alligator. Any other procedure is illegal.

No human fatalities have been attributed to alligators to date. Potentially dangerous alligators should be reported to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (1-800-792-1112) or your local game warden. Please do your part and encourage everyone at your golf course to enjoy these animals from a distance, in accordance with the laws that apply to them.

To read more about this subject please visit this website:
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/annual/hunt/alligator/>
Dr. Anthony Camerino is a Commercial Horticulture Agent with the Harris County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to 2009, STGCSA style! Believe it or not, we're already well into the new year, which I hope has gotten off to a good beginning for you (despite the lack of rain).

One thing we know hasn't gotten off to a great start is the economy, which has picked up pretty much where it left off last year.

That means a budget squeeze for many of us, so let's cross our fingers (or twist them as tightly as possible) while hoping for no hurricanes or extended droughts or anything else that might complicate the situation.

Our first official event of 2009 will take place on Mar. 9 at The Woodlands Country Club and will include golf on the Tournament Course (the old TPC). Russell Birkhimer, one of our new Board members, will be hosting the meeting (since it's not on the west side of town, I'm predicting no rain, by the way). Patrick O'Day of O'Day Drilling Company will address the gathering on the subject of "Irrigation Pumps and Pump Maintenance."

Please provide Marian Takushi with your RSVP by Mar. 6 (you can also do it online at www.stgcsa.org) so we can get a good headcount and plan accordingly, which will help us save money (remember, the economy's not too healthy).

Please make sure you follow the same procedure for all our gatherings. We've lost significant money in the past— we must

pay for those who don't show up when they've said they will—and we need to avoid that situation at all costs (remember again, the economy is not too healthy).

Our complete schedule can be found on the back page of the newsletter and on our web site, so everyone has ample opportunity to plan ahead and help us maximize the efficiency of our expenditures. The cost of meetings remains the same as last year at \$55 per meeting. If you can't make time for golf, you can attend the meeting and eat lunch for \$15.

I want to take the time to thank Wade Warmes, CGCS, and Willy Plowman for getting together with Dr. Anthony Camerino to plan our CEU pesticide class at Bear Creek. A total of 81 superintendents attended, and I'm sure they are all as appreciate of the great job that was done as myself.

Another thought about planning ahead . . . our 2009 Scholarship Tournament will be hosted by Cody Spivey on Apr. 14 at High Meadow Ranch Golf Club. The price will be \$125 per person. There will be an entry form included in the March issue of *Tee to Green*, so please act quickly and get your

place in the field reserved.

A bit farther down the road, you can look forward to the Texas Trophy event. Jason Harsh (and the STGCSA) will be hosting it

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March Meeting

Monday, March 9, 2009

The Woodlands Country Club (Tournament Course)
Host Superintendent — Russell Birkhimer

Speaker:

Patrick O'Day, O'Day Drilling Company
"Irrigation Pumps and Pump Maintenance"

Please RSVP by Mar. 6 by calling Marian Takushi at 281-494-0094, by e-mail at stgcsa@windstream.net or through the direct link on the "Upcoming Events" page of www.stpga.com.

Registration: 9 a.m. **Lunch:** 11:30-12:30

Golf: After Lunch

(Pick Your Partner — 2-Person Best Ball)

Cost: \$55

REMINDER:

You must arrive by 10:15 to play golf

Directions: From I-45 North, take the Rayford/Sawdust exit. Go left on Sawdust Road, which will turn into Grogan's Mill. Then go right on South Millbend. The clubhouse is on the left, approximately .2 miles after the turn.

Membership Moves

A new year almost always brings in an influx of new members to the STGCSEA, and 2008 is no exception. As of mid-January, the STGCSEA includes no fewer than 10 new members.

They are: *Kevin Brown*, assistant superintendent at Pine Forest Country Club; *Robert Blalock*, golf course superintendent at Lake Windcrest Golf Club; *Stovy Bowlin*, owner of Bowlin Consulting; *Josh Ferguson*, assistant superintendent at Galveston Country Club; *Jose Garcia*, head mechanic at The Club at Carlton Woods; *Clinton Garrett*, assistant superintendent at Houston National Golf Club; *Wesley Holekamp*, marketing representative for Ag Workers Mutual; *Rod Hruza* and *Brandon Marek*, sales representative and account manager, respectively, for Helena Chemical; and *Christopher Mink*, assistant superintendent at The Deerwood Club.

To each and all, our welcome mat is extended.

Prayers needed

Tommy Ayles, who served as equipment manager on Harry Yewens' staff at Old Orchard Golf Club and more recently at Weston Lakes Country Club, suffered a heart attack in January.

"Tommy was a friend of the industry and a member of the STGCSEA for years," said Yewens. "I know all our members will keep him in their thoughts and prayers as he works to recover."

Indeed. Additional updates will be provided through *Tee to Green* and the STGCSEA as they become available in the future.

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The SHO is coming!

The schedule has long been set and the 2009 Shell Houston Open will be held on the Tournament Course at Redstone Golf Club the week of Mar. 30-Apr. 5. That's the week before the Masters, in case you didn't know, and, as always, that means a strong field of golfers who choose the test their competitive readiness leading into the year's first major.



The South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association has provided a team of volunteers to marshal the practice areas

at Redstone during the tournament for the past several years, and will continue that tradition again in 2009.

Your help is needed to insure the STGCSA puts its best foot forward. If you've never participated in the effort, you've missed out on a lot of fun and an outstanding chance to mingle with some of the best golfers in the world.

In addition, the STGCSA's participation provides a great opportunity to raise the Chapter's public profile within the golf community of southeast Texas.

Volunteers are asked to work at least two shifts. The earlier you sign up, the more likely you are to secure the shifts of your choice, and, as a volunteer, you will receive a pair of Season Gallery Ticket Packets— your volunteer credential is also good for admission the entire week.

To volunteer your time and services, please go to the tournament web site (www.shellhoustonopen.com), click on the "Volunteer Info" link, and complete the required information.

You may also choose to print out a registration form and mail it in.

Photo identification badges are required of all people working the practice areas. If you have worked at the tournament in the past, your picture will be on file— you'll need to supply your user name and password so your photo can be retrieved. If you have not worked at the tournament in the past, you will be required to have your picture taken for your badge.

A new bonus was added to the benefits of volunteering last year and will be continued this time around— you are being asked to bring a friend with you to the tournament. That will be your choice, of course, but the option is available should you decide to take advantage of it.

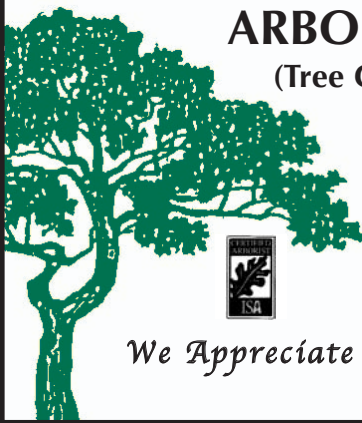
The STGCSA will reimburse volunteers for half the total cost (\$75) of their "uniforms," which includes shirts, slacks and hat.

Captains for this year's volunteer team are Doug Browne (281-799-5946), Terry Gill (281-455-1770) and myself (832-435-1645). When you sign up on the SHO web site, please give one of us a call and let us know about your plans.

There will also be an opportunity to sign up and to make shift requests at our March Meeting at The Woodlands Country Club.

— George B. Manuel

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Auld Lang Syne

Many of the STGCSA's members closed out the old year and welcomed the new at the Chapter's Annual Awards Banquet and Ceremony, held Dec. 4, 2008, at River Oaks Country Club.

The revelers were treated to an outstanding meal, a chance to trip the light fantastic to the tunes of "The Grateful Geezers," and plenty of time enjoy the warmth of their fellow professionals' camaraderie. A few examples can be seen below.

Right, left to right: Jeff Smith, Terry Gill and Ray McFarland strike a pose. Below: Host superintendent Morris Johnson and his wife, Vicki.



Below left: Lee Gravett, 2009 STGCSA President, and 2008 President Roger Goettsch, CGCS, looking stately.

Bottom left, right to left: Dennis Klene, Jeff Smith and Charles Joachim, CGCS, were up to something.

Below: the always dapper Justin Shulse struts his stuff.



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ACE!

Carl Tolbert racked up his most recent of five holes-in-one on December 26, when he sank a 212-yard 5-wood shot on the third hole of High Meadow Ranch Golf Club's Pine Barrens loop (playing it as his ninth hole).

Carl didn't get to see the ball go in the hole, but his playing partners did. And in any case, it counted as a "1" on his scorecard, his first since 1979.

Irrigation Troubleshooting Workshop

February 23, 2009 • 9am to 3pm

Cost — \$59

Host: Ewing Irrigation

For more information contact:

Jeffrey Jowell, CGCS

Ewing Golf And Irrigation, So. Texas Golf Sales
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FAX: 254-694-7127

E-Mail: golfsuperintendent@whitebluffresort.com

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Beaumont Country Club

Please contact:

Shane Hayes

Telephone: 409-790-6923

E-Mail: shanehunterhayes@yahoo.com

Mechanic Position Open

Ross Rogers Golf Complex (Amarillo)

Please contact:

Shawn Reynolds, Golf Course Superintendent

Ross Rogers Golf Course

722 NW 24TH, Amarillo, TX 79107

Office: 806-381-7917

Cell: 806-670-6782

Assistant Superintendent Needed

Amarillo Country Club

Please contact:

T.J. Heutzenroeder; Director of Golf Maintenance

Amarillo Country Club

4800 Bushland, Amarillo, TX 79106

E-Mail: heutzenroeder@hotmail.com

The STGCSA Bulletin Board is available for use by all STGCSA members. Call Steve Hunter (281-395-4927) or FAX (281-395-9547) before the 10th of each month to include your job listings, etc., in the following two issues of Tee to Green. To include your job posting on the STGCSA web site, contact Marian Takushi (stgcsa@windstream.net, 281-494-0094).

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Are you getting the word out?

The newsletter you are reading reaches all the key figures in the golf course maintenance industry of southeast Texas.

The STGCSA has created a number of "sponsorship packages" to provide you with a number of ways you can communicate with the industry through the STGCSA's newsletter, web site and monthly meetings. Call Marian Takushi (281-494-0094) or Mark Haven (979-862-8403) to find out how to get the word out about your company and its products and services.

It's that time again!

Membership fees for 2009 are now due. If you have any questions regarding your dues for 2009, please contact Marian Takushi at 281-494-0094 or send her an e-mail at stgcsa@windstream.net. Your dues must be paid by Mar. 1, 2009, for your information to be included in the 2009 STGCSA Membership Directory. A downloadable 2009 Membership Application is available within the "Members" section of www.stgcsa.org.

For your information . . .

The STGCSA offers "facility" memberships for new members who work at a facility that may not be able to get a regular superintendent membership. Call the office or a Board member to get more information, but act quickly . . . all information that's to be included in the 2009 STGCSA Membership Directory must be submitted to the Chapter office by Mar. 1, 2009.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from page 2

Sept. 13-15 at Memorial Park Golf Course, always a very popular destination for our gatherings. We'll hold our September meeting at Memorial Park, too, on Sept. 14. And yes, that's during the Texas Trophy time slot, for your convenience. Having both events at the same place (and date, roughly) will save everyone the extra trip that September usually requires.

All in all, I think we have a great schedule of events at an outstanding slate of facilities this year, and I hope you'll make plans to attend as many of our meetings as possible.

I hope, too, that you'll consider (if you haven't already) volunteering to serve on one of our committees. Most of the ground-work for the year has been laid, but every little bit helps . . . if you can take time to be a part of the effort, please call me or any of our Board members and talk it over.

— Lee Gravett



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2009 SOUTH TEXAS GCSA EVENTS

March 9

The Woodlands CC
Tournament Course

Host Superintendent: Russell Birkhimer
Pick Your Partner, 2-Person Best Ball

April 14

2009 Scholarship Tournament
High Meadow Ranch GC

Host Superintendent: Cody Spivey
Four-Person Scramble

May 18

The Wilderness GC

Host Superintendent: Blayne Sparks
Chapter Championship, First Round

June 15

Willow Fork CC

Host Superintendent: Willy Plowman
Chapter Championship, Second Round

July 20

Elkins Lake CC

Host Superintendent: James Huntsman
Power Ball Scramble

August 24

Superintendent/Pro Tournament
The Club at Falcon Point

Host Superintendent: Sean Wilson, CGCS

September 13-15

Lone Star Golf GCSA
Texas Trophy Tournament
Memorial Park GC

Host Superintendent: Jason Harsh

September 14

Memorial Park GC

Host Superintendent: Jason Harsh

October 12

La Toretta Del Lago

Host Superintendent: Todd Martin
Modified Stableford Gross/Net

November 9

Cypress Lakes GC

Host Superintendent: Jared Bonar
Gross/Net Skins

December TBA

Annual

Awards Banquet and Ceremony

*For additional details about each
monthly meeting and golf outing,
please visit the
"Upcoming Events" page of
www.stgcsa.org.*

Dress for success... please

Every time we visit a facility for one of our monthly meetings, we make an impression. To help insure that impression is positive, the STGCSA adopted a dress code a few years ago.

The dress code applies to everyone attending a meeting, and it includes only two provisions— no denim jeans or shorts (including cut-offs), and collared shirts are required. Those requirements help us meet the dress policies of the facilities that host our meetings and help us present a professional image to the public.

So, please, be considerate of your fellow professionals and make sure you abide by the STGCSA dress code.

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