

TEE TO GREEN

November 2012

The Official Publication of the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association



2013 IS AROUND THE CORNER!

The new year is coming quickly, and with that comes a lot of business to take care of!

First, we are calling our first meeting of the year at Stephen F. Austin, our “membership drive meeting”. We need your help in getting those Superintendents, Assistants, Technicians and Vendors that are not members active in our chapter. The Board of Directors is asking that if you know of someone in the golf profession/business, please bring him/her to the January meeting for free! If that person joins, your next regular meeting will be free! This won't be the only opportunity in 2013 for new potential members to get acquainted with our Board of Directors and our Chapters' philosophy. We are planning another membership drive in September for non-members only. This will allow them to ask questions, get to know the schedule and fees and get in a round of golf. If you know of anyone that is not a member and is in the turf industry, please send Marian their contact information. We will send out invitations to the January as well as the September meetings to any club/vendor that we have information on.

Rounds 4 Research is under way. Full details are on Pages 3 and 4.

Donate some rounds of golf! Just call Marian and she will fill out the form for you! 281.494.0094



Meeting Schedule

NEW DATE!!

December 14, 2012—Christmas Awards Banquet at High Meadow Ranch

[Map to High Meadow Ranch](#)

January 9, 2013—Pesticide License Renewal Class (Bear Creek Texas AgriLife Extension Office)

[Map to Texas AgriLife Extension Office](#)

January 22, 2013—Stephen F. Austin GC

Membership Drive!

[Map to Stephen F Austin GC](#)

March 26, 2013—Scholarship Tournament and Live Auction

High Meadow Ranch Golf Club

[Map to High Meadow Ranch GC](#)

[Register Now for Any Meeting!](#)

President's Message

By: Mark Haven



"As beautiful as trees are, and as fond as you and I are of them, we still must not lose sight of the fact that there is a limited place for them in golf. We must not allow our sentiments to crowd out the real intent of a golf course, that of providing fair playing conditions. If it in any way interferes with a properly played stroke, I think the tree is an unfair hazard and should not be allowed to stand." - Donald Ross, from *Golf Has Never Failed Me*

We all know that the last couple of years have ravaged our tree populations. Perhaps nature is in siding with Mr. Ross. Just like bunkers, I am sure you will all agree that trees cost more to maintain than our patrons realize.

I can't tell you how pleased I was with the turnout at the annual meeting at Brae Burn Country Club. Terry Gill is a true gentleman and always a great host. And the greens were so nice I had the best putting round I've had in a long time. We kicked off our commitment to the Rounds 4 Research program as well as reiterated our commitment to the Raffle for Research program. Oh, and we elected the new board. I have full confidence that Sean will lead a great group through another successful year.

After looking at the college schedules I have moved the Christmas Party back a week to December 14th. We'll kick off the evening at 6:30 p.m. and finish it with live music from Shay Domann. You can start registering online and the full invite is on the last page of the newsletter. Click on Shay's photo and listen to one of his songs.

It has been a fast and furious year but all in all I think it was a success. I want to thank my fellow board members who have made everything work. I want to thank Marian for being the center piece of our efforts. Finally, I want to thank the membership for my chance to serve. It has been a lot of work, but the rewards are much greater than the sacrifice. Feel free to contact me for any reason.
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Rounds 4 Research



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the SouthTexas GCSA, we are pleased to announce that our chapter has committed to participate in the Rounds 4 Research program. Earlier this year, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf announced that it would be conducting Rounds 4 Research in order to assist affiliated chapters in efforts to raise much needed funds for research-based programs such as education, scholarships, advocacy and agronomic research.

Rounds 4 Research is based on the practice of securing donated rounds of golf and putting them up for public auction. The EIFG will work with the Bidding for Good website (biddingforgood.com) to auction the donated rounds and administer the various notification and revenue collection activities. 80 percent of the proceeds will be distributed directly to participating chapters or turfgrass organizations for use on research-based. With more than 650,000 registrants, the site supports non-profit organizations with the most highly sought item, golf rounds.

It will take a committed effort from all of us to make this program a success. Auctions began on October 1st and will run continuously in two week cycles through the end of the year. We would like to get our chapter started with this effort and would appreciate your consideration of donating a round from your facility. The more rounds we secure, the greater the revenue we can generate in support of our members and chapter.

We have provided extensive information about the program and support documentation that you can **share with others** at your facility in soliciting rounds. You can also find lots more information by visiting www.rounds4research.com and more about the Environmental Institute for Golf at www.eifg.org. From that perspective, it is important to remember that this program is for the benefit of all aspects of golf. This is not a program that will only benefit golf course superintendents.

We thank you in advance for your donation and support of this very important effort. Once you have secured the round from your facility, please fill out the accompanied "R4R Round Donation Form" and either fax the form to 281.494.0094 or email the form to: stgcsa@stgcsa.org. You may also call Marian at 281.494.0094 and she will fill out the form for you by phone! After submitting the form, your facility will be contacted by GCSAA in order to finalize details regarding your donation.



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It's not really golf without the green.

Through online auctions of golf rounds, the Rounds 4 Research program raises funds to help address the critical shortage of resources for turfgrass research.



Rounds for Research Kicks Off

Imagine the functionality of today's golf courses or the ability to manage them in an economically viable manner if there were no resources to fuel innovation, address challenges brought on by Mother Nature or respond to regulatory pressures. The absence of ongoing university-based research, education, advocacy programs and course operation resources threatens the ability of these small businesses to succeed and of golfers to maximize their experience. In short, the lack of this support directly impacts our quality of life.

South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association has pledged to participate in the Environmental Institute for Golf's national online auction, Rounds 4 Research, for the next 3 years. Through our participation we will need to secure rounds of golf or golf related travel packages in order to raise funds for our organization. As a result, the grant received from the auction proceeds of our rounds will be used in alignment with the not for profit purpose of the Environmental Institute for Golf – research, education, environmental programs, advocacy and scholarships.

At the end of each year of participation in Rounds 4 Research and upon request of the Environmental Institute for Golf, our organization will provide a detailed outline of how the grant monies were expended.

Research

Research in areas such as water quality and conservation, pest management and nutrient use significantly enhances the ability of golf facilities to operate more efficiently. This agronomic-focused research directly supports new and improved management programs and the development of new products. It can also have an impact in the following areas:

- Water quality protection research helps ensure regulatory compliance and environmental stewardship
- Water management research ensures healthy turfgrass and operational efficiency
- Nutrient management helps improve playing surfaces and water quality
- Pest management research contributes to improvements in the way threats to turfgrasses are controlled in the never-ending fight against pests

Education

Turfgrass and golf course superintendent associations partner with university scientists and industry professionals to conduct high-quality, research-based education. Expanding knowledge is critical in developing innovative management programs that benefit both the golf course and the golfer.

Advocacy

Since golf facilities are businesses that have the ability to impact the environment, it is only natural that they are subject to regulation that may impact land and water use, storm water runoff, energy consumption and the use of nutrients and pesticides. However, a regulation can have unintended negative consequences if it is not created with a comprehensive view. By taking an active approach to the regulatory process, the golf industry can actually help craft or influence policy in a manner that is beneficial to all parties involved.

Scholarships

Scholarships are an investment in the future of the game. They are a commitment to the people who will directly impact the game, supporting the educational pursuits of future golf course managers.

Scholarships have been a part of the EIFG's focus since 1955, when the organization was founded as the GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund. In 2011, the EIFG awarded 53 scholarships totaling more than \$130,000.

Environmental Programs

The EIFG is focused on providing golf courses with resources that enhance their social, economic and environmental value to communities. Resources for golf course managers include case studies, the GCSAA Values document, best management practices and the IPM Planning Guide.

[Click here to donate rounds of golf!](#)

Schedule for Auctions 2012

Nov 12th - 26th Dec 3rd - 17th
2013 schedule TBA

[How to Bid on Golf](#)

Spread the word.....

Bid for golf packages at: www.biddingforgood.com

[Visit the rounds4research website](#)



What I Didn't Learn in School

Diligent studying in the classroom provided a sound foundation for my career in golf course management, but my B.S. and M.S. degrees never completely prepared me for all the issues and challenges of the profession.

BY JAKE SCHNEIDER

After six-and-a-half years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it is hard to imagine any classes that I did not have the opportunity to take in preparation to enter the golf course management industry. In hindsight, wiser decisions when choosing electives might have been made, but thanks to some questionable class selection my knowledge of dinosaurs and gems is greater than it might otherwise be. Yet, there are probably other turf management professionals who have substantially more classroom knowledge than I do of all things pterodactyls or diamonds. Such is the nature of a profession where so much is learned on the job. Don't get me wrong; I would not trade my formal education for anything, but chances are you know of a highly successful superintendent or assistant superintendent who has no college education or pursued a major totally unrelated to golf course management. Still, despite my bias, I believe the best foundation for a career in this industry is gained through earning a degree in a traditional turf management field. I recently completed my fourth year

as the assistant superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wisconsin, and there is no doubt that numerous classes in soil science, horticulture, plant pathology, and entomology have helped me to grow better turf. Since entering the real world, I realize the supplemental classes I took in written communication, human resource management, native vegetation/ecology, and accounting are just as important and equally useful as my basic turf science studies. However, I now know that growing grass is only half the battle to achieve success as a golf course supervisor. The classroom never prepared me for the challenge of just keeping turf alive to meet the golfers' need for perfection or the frustration of allocating considerable time and labor to keep non-grass areas of the course, such as bunkers, in pristine condition.

I recall being chosen as the 2004 USGA Green Section intern for the North-Central Region during my first season as a student intern at Blackhawk Country Club. During a week with Bob Vavrek, USGA agronomist, we toured a wide variety of golf courses that included elite upscale layouts as well as economical and fun "mom

and pop" type courses — perhaps the kind of course that provided summer employment during high school and the early inspiration for many superintendents to pursue a career in turf management. When my week as a junior agronomist was over, Monroe Miller, former superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club for 36 years, 2004 USGA Green Section Award winner, and current executive director of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, asked me to write an article about the experience for *The Grass Roots*, the publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. How could I refuse my boss and editor of *The Grass Roots*? In that article, I wrote, "With a relatively easy summer throughout most of southern Wisconsin, many of the problems that were discussed had nothing to do with agronomic issues or with turfgrass at all. It should come as no surprise to most of you that shrinking budgets and political dealings were frequent topics of conversation." Sound familiar? Political issues haven't changed much in the past seven years, but at least

(continued on page 6)



Agronomy classes helped me understand the importance of a sound aeration and topdressing program for putting greens. However, the classroom never prepared me for the difficult task of convincing golfers that sometimes causing temporary disruption to the putting surfaces is necessary to sustain a healthy, consistent playing surface



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agronomy has been a more frequent topic of conversation than it was in 2004, due to the stressful weather of 2010 and 2011. I was fortunate enough to have received an excellent education while pursuing my degrees, but the following are several of the more important things that could not be learned in the classroom.

Accounting classes were helpful regarding the basic



preparation of a budget for golf course maintenance operations. Never did a class prepare me for the shock of how much of a golf course budget would be spent for maintaining bunkers, deep roughs, woods, and other areas of the course that are meant to be avoided.

POLITICS AND COMMUNICATION

No, I'm not talking about Republicans versus Democrats. Trust me, with the election and recall cycles in Wisconsin, that is the last thing that I want to talk about. Rather, I am referring to the politics of dealing with golfing and non-golfing members, owners, general managers, neighbors, and your employees. Besides duties such as being an agronomist, electrician, mechanic, plumber, arborist, human resource manager, accountant, and landscaper, a successful superintendent must supervise and educate a diverse group of people every day. With rare exceptions, turf managers do not own the properties they maintain, and decisions regarding course conditions are often made by individuals or committees that have little or no agronomic knowledge. It is easy to assume some degree of ownership when spending so much time and effort on 200-plus acres of land. Yet, it is sometimes difficult to remember that it is still their course and not my course. The ultimate goal is to make golfers happy and to sustain healthy turf. This requires educating decision makers so they can make sound decisions or to the point where they allow us to manage the course without interference. The difficulty of this task can increase exponentially when turnover of committee members occurs frequently. One must be an outstanding communicator to survive course politics. Very few people outside of the turf industry understand exactly what our jobs entail, and even fewer realize the agronomic sacrifices that are often required to produce desirable golf course conditioning. Nonetheless, with accurate and timely communication, these barriers can be broken. In light of universal access to smart phones and computers, there is really

no excuse for your golfers and supervisors to not have timely access to course conditions and maintenance operations that affect play. At Blackhawk C.C., we developed a maintenance blog (view it at <http://blackhawkgrounds.blogspot.com/>). It is updated weekly with information about activities on the course and in the maintenance facility. No technical jargon, just current information about "what" we are doing as well as "why" and "how." I am not sure how many of our members read the blog, but I do know that some read it regularly and they pass on some of the information to those who do not. By communicating effectively, you may be able to improve the course in ways that otherwise would not have been possible. My suspicions are that it would be difficult to learn the dynamics of country club politics in a classroom. Instead, these skills are learned over time through your own experiences and by picking the brains of industry veterans. After all, superintendents who cannot handle the politics and the associated communication demands will rarely survive to become veterans. Yet, the fundamentals for both oral and written communication skills can be acquired in the classroom. I was so nervous during one of my first college speeches that I was uncontrollably shaking the paper I was holding. There is no doubt that it was embarrassing, but from that point forward I vowed to explore every available opportunity to improve my public speaking. My commitment to improvement paid off, because later, in graduate school, I won the oral presentation competition at the International Crop Science Society meetings. Although I still do not particularly enjoy speaking to large crowds, I no longer convulse while doing so.

My classroom experience could not prepare me for the



frustration and helpless feeling of taking the blame for what Mother Nature occasionally does to the golf course. A good example is winter injury to a putting green, especially when cool spring weather hinders the rate of turf recovery.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH VENDORS

Don't get me wrong, vendors are not an unruly, unlikable group. In fact, the opposite seems to be true, which makes saying "no" to them difficult. There are a host

of honest, dependable suppliers of equipment, plant protectants, etc., and they all want your business. There are so many issues to address. Do we go with agency or off-patent? How many distributors should get our business? Should we bid out each individual product? Should we schedule time for salesmen to visit, even with no intention of buying from them? For the most part, I have yet to come up with a good answer to these questions, but I believe that one should remain open and courteous with all vendors. Just like you, they are trying to make a living.

REGULATIONS 101

Right or wrong, the number of federal, state, and local rules and regulations that affect our golf course increases every year. Between labor laws, required postings, pesticide/fertilizer restrictions, recordkeeping, water-use recordkeeping, restrictions, and building codes, it is an understatement to say there is more documentation necessary than I ever imagined. It was never mentioned in class that silica sand was a reportable hazardous material, but now I am going to be looking into personal protection equipment (PPE) requirements for topdressing greens.

BALANCING WORK AND HOME

I did not fully appreciate the unpredictable work schedule and long hours that are required to keep the course in peak condition until I became the assistant superintendent. I do not believe that 80-hour work weeks are healthy or productive, but even 50 to 60 hours during the heat of the summer can be incredibly draining. The profession becomes extra demanding when you are held accountable for yourself, the maintenance staff, and Mother Nature, so it is just not easy to leave work. Coming from college, where you are only worried about balancing partying with getting passing grades, it takes a while to find the ideal balance between time at work and time at home. If not already married, be sure to date someone while working for at least two summers when putting in long hours at the golf course before getting down on one knee. When my new bride said, "I've come to not expect you to be around very much in summer," I realized that she fully knew what she was getting herself into. There you have it — several concepts I wish I could have learned in school to succeed in the golf course management industry. Maybe if I go to school for another six-and-a-half years the list might be eliminated, but probably not. It is hard to fit 200-plus acres of turf and everyone associated with it into a classroom.

JAKE SCHNEIDER is the assistant superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wis.

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Past Presidents Lunch—October 23, 2012 Riverbend Country Club

(Thank you to George Cincotta and staff for a wonderful lunch!)



From Left to Right Front Row: Board Member-Brandon Cole, John Biddy-1973, Mark Haven-2012, Bill McCoy-1972, Doug Browne-2006, Board Member-Mark Baughman, George Manuel-2000, Wade Warms-2011, Mark Monroe-1983/84, Members-Dale/Nancy Bowman. From Left to Right Top Row: Sean Wilson-2013, Johnny Walker-1997, Charles Joachim-1979/80, Terry Gill-2003, George Cincotta-2001

Get to know.....Keith Watson

I was born in Monroe, Louisiana and lived in Arkansas where I grew up in the Sand and Gravel business that my Granddad and later, my Father owned. As a teenager, I moved to Texas and graduated from McCullough High in the Woodlands. At 17, I talked my mother in to letting me join the military and by 18 I was on my way to a 21 year career in the United States Air Force. I served 13 years active duty and the remainder split between the Texas Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve where I retired at the rank of Technical Sergeant in June 2010. While attached to several fighter units world wide, I proudly served in Operation Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia, Operation Enduring Freedom, Kosovo and more recently, Operation Iraqi Freedom in Bagdad, Iraq. In 2000, while in the Reserves, I ventured into the transportation industries, which eventually lead me to the Golf Sand business where I landed my second career.

Earlier this year, I made a career move and joined Turf Materials Inc. and thoroughly enjoy working with such a group of motivated and talented people. Tony and Brenda Campagna have entrusted in me the opportunity to head up the Houston Golf Sand market while they concentrate their efforts on the Dallas area. It is a true pleasure to continue to work in our industry. I value the relationships and friendships I've developed over the past 8 years in this business. I want to take this opportunity to pass on a word of thanks to the loyal customers that continue to allow me to do what I do best. Without you guys I wouldn't have the opportunity to be in this industry or the STGCSA.

I married the love of my life, Stayc, and can honestly say that I've married my best friend. She is an awesome lady that totally completes me! Combined, we have five children; I have two boys Wyatt 14 and Garrett 12. Stayc has 17-year-old triplets, Shelby, Bailey and Bryan (thank goodness for the Scholarship Fund). My son Wyatt was diagnosed with Autism at 18 months. He has brought something a little more special to our family and a dedication to education and better awareness to Autism. Nothing brings us more joy than spending time with our children, family and friends. Our second passion is the love of our Harley's, which we try to get out and ride every chance we get. I'm

Patriot Guard Riders and the
ciation. I love the outdoors and
I'm an avid hunter and fisherman.

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Welcome New Member, Jason Burgess, Assistant Supt. at The Wilderness Golf Club

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North Texas GCSA (Lori Goodrich)— 817.377.4552 www.ntgcsa.org

Texas Gulf Coast SA (Darlene Curlee)-877.448.9944 www.tgcsa.org

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Annual Meeting—Brae Burn Country Club—October 15, 2012
Thank you, Terry Gill and staff for a great day of camaraderie and golf!



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1st 140 (scorecard playoff) Alan Hess Paul Tessman Jason Burgess David Gray	141 Bill Abetz Tony DiOrio Mike Nuzzo John Dailey	1st 150 (scorecard playoff) John Freeman Jeff Smith Mike Perez	151 Brian Johnson Brent Ratcliff Jordon Droll
2nd 140 Jeff Smelser Richard Kane Ken Stevenson Jack Hargrove	142 Steven Chernosky Pat Johnston Lee Gravett Kevin White	2nd 150 (scorecard playoff) Sean Wilson Jerry Takushi Clark Webb Andy Adair	152 Doug Browne Randy Samoff Kevin Lyles Chris Lineberger
3rd (scorecard playoff) 141 Harry Yewens Ben Fultz Charles Joachim George Cincotta	144 Carl Tolbert Phil Taylor Steve Vaughn Johnny Walker	3rd 150 David Tennant Kent Knowles Wade Warms	152 Mark Haven Terry Gill Cody Spivey Cody Skarpa
	146 Chris Webster Danny Atchison Wayne Stanton Jerry Huntsman		159 Jesus Polio Blayne Sparks Clinton Garrett

South Texas GCSA

Presents

Shay Domann



December 14, 2012
Annual Scholarship
Awards Ceremony and Banquet

6:30 pm - midnight

\$42.50 per person

***Includes Prime Rib Dinner/Desert –
Limited open bar (beer/wine/setups) – Live music***

High Meadow Ranch Golf Club

37300 Golf Club Trail Magnolia, TX 77355

Casual/Western Dress

(BYOB is accepted and setups will be available)