Where do I start?

I have tried over the past few weeks after being reminded by Carol that my “Presidential Message” was due for the June newsletter. So much has happened the past few months all around the world as we are all dealing with Covid 19. Science is how we conduct most of our business in the “Dirt Dog” world of golf maintenance. I think we pride ourselves in thinking that we are a bit of a scientist ourselves. We are faced with numerous challenges that can be facets of pathogens. We buy chemicals and do different cultural practices following our proven regiment. But sometimes we experiment for a positive outcome with new chemistry or a new way of looking at a problem. The challenges the wonderful real scientists are doing for us all against this unseen virus is amazing. We all owe them a debt of gratitude, including the unseen in the laboratories. All the front line workers - how do you thank them for all they have done? And to all of the rest of the workers who have been out there trying to keep the economy going?

THANK YOU EVERYONE!

The executive board worked very closely with the Sun Country Golf Association and had many emails and a virtual meeting back in May. The discussions were centered on trying to position our industry and show we could open safely if, given the opportunity. Dana Lehner the Executive Director for the Sun Country worked tirelessly crafting many versions of letters and a “BMP” outline to present to the state leaders.

Continued on Page 2
President's Message Continued

By showing them that our BMP is similar in fashion to the BMPs we have crafted for our BMP’s the state leaders were able to check the box off for golf. This showed them we had a plan to move forward.

Click the Coronavirus logo to the right for a public announcement regarding Covid-19 from the Sun Country Golf Association.

Cale Pilgreen was awarded a five hundred dollar Alan Slater scholarship for the upcoming school year in September 2020 at NMSU.

As for the chapter we have elected John King to be the new “Vendor Relation Rep” and will take Bryan Klock's place as a non-voting member of the RGGCSA board. Thank you Bryan for your time and support of the chapter over the past few years. We are looking forward to having John back on the board again.

Unfortunately the last two meetings from March and the upcoming meeting in July have had to be canceled due to the Corona virus. We are optimistic that maybe the meeting in October can still happen at Twin Warriors but only time will tell. We have done one virtual board meeting on “Go To Meeting” and will be scheduling a second one very soon.

Things are so different for all of us at our respective courses and in the world but new ideas and ways to do things have been good. We all know we will get through this.

Be safe, Be smart, hope to see all of you soon!

Jimmy Rodriguez

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The world is a much different place than when we gathered in Orlando in January for the 2020 Golf Industry Show. It seems much longer ago than just five months. And as many of you have had to adjust or adapt your business operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so has GCSAA. Each summer, we begin revving up planning for the next conference and trade show. 2021 is no exception to that, but as we look toward Las Vegas, it is with a much different lens than in other years.

Our usual work of coordinating the gold standard education, networking opportunities and industry innovations you have come to expect continues, but we are also driven by the key question in the face of an uncertain world: Can we produce a quality experience that meets the safety recommendations for COVID-19?

To help us prepare, we are developing five scenarios and mapping out what every activity would look like in each scenario. The five scenarios are based on potential pandemic threat levels.

Scenario One (low threat): Business as usual.

Scenario Two (minimal threat): Live event in Las Vegas with social distancing and large-gathering restrictions in place.

Scenario Three (moderate threat): Hybrid with a live event in LV and virtual event options.

Scenario Four (substantial threat): An all virtual event.

Scenario Five (significant threat): Event postponed or cancelled.

We were very fortunate that the 2020 GIS had already taken place before the virus took hold in most of the country. Many similar gatherings were postponed or cancelled this year, and we have been able to watch and learn from others.

We are equally fortunate that Las Vegas, a city so dependent on tourism, is at the forefront of making sure visitors are safe. The city reopened its casinos on June 4, and the brand-new Las Vegas Convention Center, hotels and all venues are consulting with public health experts to redefine cleaning, safety and sanitation standards. The Global Risk Advisory Council’s STAR is the cleaning industry’s only outbreak prevention, response and recovery accreditation for facilities. The LVCC is one of the first convention centers to pursue this certification and should be accredited by the end of August.

The NFL’s 2021 Pro Bowl recently announced it plans to hold the event in Las Vegas on Jan. 31, and the Consumer Electronics Show, the largest tech industry event in the world, has announced it will go forward with its 2021 convention January 6-9 at the new LVCC. We too are currently moving ahead with hosting our event in Las Vegas.

In addition to keeping an eye on the latest data and the status of other events, we also want to know what your level of comfort is in attending a live event. In mid-August, we will be conducting a survey of members to gauge your sentiment on traveling and any other factors that could affect your attendance. In October, we will have a follow up survey in case circumstances have changed. Using this information and guidance from health and venue officials, we will decide on the best scenario for all involved in October, with registration opening in November.

With so much uncertainty in the world, it is difficult to know where we will be at the start of 2021. However, I am certain that GCSAA is putting your safety and comfort first when it comes to planning the conference and show. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us.

Rhett Evans
GCSAA CEO
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For those who I have not met, my name is Aaron Sunderlin, and I am the Superintendent at Black Mesa Golf Club. I am in my third season and this is my first year on the board of the RGGCSA. In January, during our board meeting, we all were tasked with writing an article this year for the newsletter. I was confident about the topic that I was going to write about. I heard about a program this winter from the USGA called Monarchs in the Rough. I thought it would be a great idea to convert some unused native areas of the golf course for this project. A few months later I received the wildflower seed and the milkweed seed selected for our zone. This February, I began growing several flats of milkweed plants in small pots from seed. Indeed, the seed that was sent was viable, and the plants are doing quite well. I wanted to have some mature specimens to anchor the project to show progress.

Flash forward to June, and unfortunately this project found itself on the back burner along with several other projects that were planned at the golf course. I would be remissed to not mention Covid-19, it has dominated our news cycle since March and has led to extreme challenges and new behaviors that I couldn’t have fathomed.

Wearing face coverings, gloves, and no live sports action was not how I pictured 2020. With limited staff, I think most of us are just trying to tread water. Mowing out the course, repairing irrigation, and keeping equipment running are using up most of our resources available to us.

In a normal season with adequate staffing Greens Committees, or General Managers would wonder, what is this guy accomplishing? Continued on next page
But this year has been anything but typical. Someday we all will look back on this year and realize that it made us as Superintendents, and the golf industry stronger. I think the labor pool in the future will be beneficial to all of us that were struggling to find quality golf course maintenance team members. The growing list of things we need to do, and projects to improve our golf courses will get accomplished.

I look forward to implementing this project and sharing an update with everyone. Pollinators such as the honeybee and the butterfly play an important role in agriculture and the ecosystem. I encourage everyone to use caution when spraying neonicotinoids for grub control and avoid using herbicides in wildflower native areas.

I still enjoy watching the sun come up at the course in the morning, and I am very grateful to be a part of the golf course community. I wish everyone good health and be safe with your daily operations.
With Covid still among us we have learned some valuable lessons in time management. The team is short staffed but still trying to meet the requirements of the everyday golfer. This year we were not able to hire seasonal staff to assist with the golf course maintenance which has us cutting a few corners but still keeping the course in great shape.

We started the year in March with aeration; luckily we purchased a tractor and larger aerator a couple years ago. The tractor and larger aerator helped greatly by not needing as many hands to perform the operation. The team pulled together and managed to aerate, harvest, top-dress, and drag sand on 22 greens with a two day window.

Not long after aeration the course closed making it seem like our efforts were for nothing. We rode out the long closure by continuing maintenance of the course. Without golfers everyday things progressed easily with no interruptions. Most days felt like you were working for nothing with nobody to enjoy the fruits of your labor. We managed the long days by adding projects like irrigation additions in areas that needed some help. Without the golfers on the course we were able to mow the entire course by noon, which gave us time for the extra projects.

The course opened back up on May 3rd with a fresh look. The course has never gone that long without traffic, and the compaction that we always see at the end of the cart paths was gone.
We are all very aware of the important issues that required the chapter to make the very difficult decision to cancel our July event at Kokopelli in Alto. The Board of Directors felt strongly that the health and well being of our members and their families was the highest priority.

We hope everyone is understanding of the decision and any inconvenience it may have caused.

We also want to extend a very big thank you to our hosts at Kokopelli for working with us on the schedule change. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to scheduling another event at your venue in the future.

Thank you to Rodney Dean the host Superintendent and your staff for inviting us to your beautiful golf course. And of course, thank you to our always generous sponsor, Winfield United who was ready to make it a great day! We look forward to getting back on track soon!
Continued from page 7  The additions to the irrigation had the hot spots under control and looking wonderful for the new start. Once the golfers started again we saw an increase in play like we had never seen before. The mowing became more difficult by the day just trying to stay ahead of the play. The mowing has become normal again jumping between golf groups to stay ahead and still manage to complete at the end of the day. Without many tournaments yet we are managing to stay up with our normal routines.

Knowing that tournaments are coming back we will have to figure out how to take care of all the little things we have let go to maintain with short staff. The cart paths have not been edged and the weed-eating has been let go to make sure the course is mowed and playable. The edging and weed-eating are maintenance projects our seasonal staff takes care of during the summer. With budget cuts looking more likely we will have to continue to figure out how to make all of this function with less and less. The team is remaining in good spirits despite the shortfalls along the way.

I know there are a lot of golf courses with the same issues we have, short staff and short budget. I am proud of all the superintendents and staffs of all the courses that have managed to make it through this pandemic without having to close the doors. I know there are a few courses that will not reopen due to the shortfall during the pandemic, you will be greatly missed. Let’s hope the remainder of this year continues without a snag and 2021 comes in with a whole new outlook.
There are seasons in our lives and careers that seem to define us. They force us to evolve and craft a different way of living and working. We are certainly going through an epic season of change in 2020. Covid-19 and the resulting pandemic have forever altered our lives and now we find ourselves facing a multitude of change and challenges.

The GCSAA has gathered a lot of information that can help you manage your golf facility and answer general questions about the current pandemic and the constantly changing rules, regulations and suggestions. You can access this information at www.gcsaa.org/resources/covid-19-pandemic-resources. I want to share with you some new wisdom with old roots that can help you and our industry navigate safely in this brave new world.

I have been in the golf management industry for many years, and I have worked in multiple markets and climates. I have survived economic downturns, Y2K, droughts, floods, fires, labor shortages, language barriers, Pythium Volutum and prep for five televised golf tournaments. Collectively, all these events added together are small compared to the Covid-19 pandemic. My grandfather used to say when times were tough, “There is always a way. It may be difficult, it may seem unlikely, or even impossible, but there is always a way.” From growing up on a family farm in Indian Creek, Georgia, to managing one of Texas’s most famous golf resorts, I have observed with each problem, no matter how complex it is, there’s always a solution and way to succeed. Three things are critical to finding the way through problems whether they are ordinary (broken irrigation line) or epic (Covid-19): 1. Control your emotions; 2. Display a will to succeed; 3. Blend tradition with innovation to create a new reality.

**Control your emotions**
The shock of how fast our normal lives changed with the pandemic was staggering. Superintendents were operating normally one minute and then they were notified by authorities that their club must close at midnight.

When this happens, superintendents must create full contingency plans and an immediate response to all stakeholders. There is no Google answer to this situation and the clock is ticking. Generally, when given these parameters, you would be mad and confused. Unfortunately, you have just arrived at the first of many decisions that will shape the future of your staff, your property and yourself. Boom! Welcome to the new world.

Your story may be worse or better than this example. No doubt you are being tested.
Personally, I had to lay off 15 staff members and reduce the remaining staff to 20 hours per week during our closure, but at least we can execute essential maintenance. Your first actions should be professional, kind and full of emotional control. This will not be easy. Your attitude and words will become your legacy while fueling the response of your team. Be positive and do the job at the highest level possible with the given resources until the job ends, whether it’s today or 30 years from now. You cannot control every situation, but you can control how you react and that is the key. Replace your fear with the faith that you are the property expert and best hope of finding success in the new paradigm.

Display the will to succeed
There is something powerful within each of us when the will to succeed is larger than any trial or tribulation. How committed are you to seeing your club through these difficult times? What sacrifices are you willing to make? Where do you draw the line? Champions make the all-in commitment, risking it all to win that day.

Heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali said, “You have to have the will before you can gain the skills.” This is true of any endeavor. Right now, you may only have some of the skills needed to rise to the top of our profession during these trying times, but the will to succeed will inspire you to improve, learn new skills and persevere.

Covid-19 is a serious threat and we have not yet seen the deep impact it will have. We cannot stop believing that this, too, shall pass. We can make a difference. Everyone has a breaking point. I know from personal experience that what we think is our breaking point is far from our actual breaking point. In Karate, we have a saying: Everyone wants to be a champion until they get hit (or kicked) in the face. It is a matter of choice.

Success is truly a ratio of your desire to succeed vs. your willingness to quit. I have chosen to do everything I can to help my property and staff weather the pandemic storm. I am learning new skills and perfecting old ones. I never thought I would have to take the temperature of every staff member before and after every shift or that my 9th degree black belt would make me a great security guard during the course closure. My advice to you is to take care of your mind, body and spirit, and commit 100 percent to building a better golf industry and career. Be the example for your property and, by force of will, overcome the current trials and be a hero in our most dire season.

Blend tradition with innovation
Now you must draw on the best of yesterday and forge the latest skills.
Combining tradition and innovation is the cornerstone that the refit golf industry will be built upon. The core best management practices that have stood the test of time must still be employed and mastered, with the missing ingredient being the skill to innovate and master your craft under new expectations.

The difference in knowing how to do something and why you do something requires a dose of reverse engineering. Starting where we are today, glance into the future and project where you want to be. You must develop people, projects and processes to move from our current reality to the brighter future.

You may need better agronomics or, perhaps, a blending of agronomy and finance. Labor and team-building will be in high demand. There will be individuals and organizations that will see a better way where everyone else sees only obstacles. Do you have some ideas that fit this synergy? Do you have the courage in these most challenging of times to put them into action? When I was 16 years old, I coined the phrase “environomics” as part my FFA SAE project. Environomics, the fusion of an environmental and financial plan, has guided my life and career. I expect that environomics 2020 will feature some new twists of execution given our current situation. We are an industry of innovators that all have apprenticed with legends of our profession. It’s time for our generation to prove its worth. I look forward to seeing the results.

We have never seen a challenge as great as the 2020 pandemic. I hope that you can use these words of encouragement to improve your personal and professional situation. Please follow the latest recommendations to be safe, wash your hands, avoid touching your face with your hands, practice social distancing, stay home if you are sick, cover your cough, wear a mask if you are sick or caring for someone who is, and see a doctor if you have a cough, fever or other symptoms. Follow the posted rules for shelter in place or other directives from designated authorities and above all be kind to everyone you encounter (including yourself). My thoughts and prayers are with the golf course industry and may we all find our way through this difficult time.

Anthony L. Williams, CGCS, CGM, is the director of golf course maintenance and landscaping at the Four Seasons Resort Club Dallas at Las Colinas in Irving, Texas, and a frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.

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The GCSAA Disaster Relief Fund was established in 2006 in reaction to Hurricane Katrina. It provides financial assistance to GCSAA members who suffer personal loss due to natural disasters. To contact the fund, call 800-472-7878 or email mbrhelp@gcsaa.org. Donations are tax-deductible and can be made directly to the fund. The fund is administered by the GCSAA’s philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG), a 501(c)3 organization. If you have been personally impacted, please reach out to the fund.

GCSAA knows many members around the world have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The GCSAA Disaster Relief Fund has provided financial assistance to those affected by the crisis. GCSAA’s friends at BASF and Syngenta have donated to the fund. BASF donated $25,000 and Syngenta donated $15,000. To learn more, visit the fund’s website.
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A guide to selecting the right bunker sand for your course

Brian Whitlark
Agronomist, West Region

<table>
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<th>PARTICLE</th>
<th>DIAMETER</th>
<th>SIEVE</th>
<th>% RETAINED BY WEIGHT</th>
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<td>Gravel</td>
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<td>No. 10</td>
<td>≤ 2%</td>
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<td>Very Coarse Sand</td>
<td>1.0 - 2.0 mm</td>
<td>No. 18</td>
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<td>No. 35</td>
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<td>No. 18</td>
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<td>Silt + Clay</td>
<td>&lt; 0.05 mm</td>
<td>Pan</td>
<td>≤ 3%</td>
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Selecting a bunker sand that is best suited for the site-specific conditions on golf courses is critical to producing and maintaining quality playing conditions and maximizing bunker longevity. The two properties of bunker sand that will most influence performance are particle size distribution and sand shape. These characteristics can be accurately defined in the laboratory. Additionally, there are many other factors to consider such as drainage, cost, vulnerability to wind and water erosion, crusting potential, chemical stability and color. All these characteristics will influence the quality of the golf experience and are key considerations in selecting sand for your golf course bunkers.

The intent of this article is to 1) summarize nine key bunker sand characteristics, 2) provide practical sand selection guidelines for bunkers given a range of architectural styles, climatic conditions, lining materials and golfer expectations, and 3) answer a few frequently asked questions regarding bunker sand.

Key Bunker Sand Characteristics
There are nine key bunker sand characteristics that can be tested in a laboratory: particle size distribution, particle shape, coefficient of uniformity, angle of repose, penetrometer reading, infiltration rate, crusting potential, chemical reaction and color. The soil moisture release curve (SMRC) and moisture column tests will also be discussed. The following text will summarize these characteristics and how they are tested, and offer new perspectives based on current challenges observed in the field.

1. Particle size
In 1985 and 1986, USGA agronomists cooperated with golf courses across the United States to assess bunker sand quality and collected a total of 42 bunker sands for laboratory testing. To this day, the results from this study by K.W. Brown and J.C. Thomas are regarded as the industry standard for bunker sand selection.

Continued on next page
Brown and Thomas suggested that 78% of the particles in bunker sands should be between 0.1 and 1.0 mm in diameter. This range is broader than what is recommended for rootzone mixtures in the USGA Recommendations for a Method of Putting Green Construction, and for good reason. A narrower range may omit acceptable bunker sands and may result in a bunker sand with too many particles within only one or two size classes, which can lead to soft conditions. Less than 15% of the bunker sand particles should be in the very coarse fraction, between 1 and 2 mm. This is more than twice the percentage allowed in the putting green recommendations because drainage, not moisture retention, is paramount in bunkers and coarse particles tend to promote better drainage and are less prone to erosion. The Brown and Thomas guidelines limit material larger than sand – i.e., gravel-sized particles greater than 2 mm in diameter – to less than 2%. No golfer wants to ruin their new sand wedge hitting from gravel-filled bunkers. Given the importance of drainage, fine particles must be minimized. The combined silt and clay fractions must not exceed 3%. Excess silt and clay will cause crusting when dry, increase moisture retention and reduce drainage capabilities. Additionally, the very fine sand content – between 0.05 and 0.1 mm – should be less than 5%. The guidelines for fine material are more stringent than for putting green rootzones because of the importance of drainage and minimal moisture retention for bunker playability.
Refer to Table 1 for the particle size distribution guidelines.

2. Particle shape
Sand particle shape is just as critical as the particle size distribution and is characterized by the degree of angularity and sphericity. Sphericity is an indication of shape. Round particles have high sphericity and oblong particles have lower sphericity. Angular sands resemble a cut piece of glass with sharp, jagged edges, while a well-rounded sand is smooth and looks more like a potato. Figure 1 shows the six classifications used to describe angularity and the three classifications that describe sphericity. Selecting sands that range from very angular to subangular and have low to medium sphericity will likely produce desirable bunker playing conditions. Well-rounded, rounded and high-sphericity sands lead to soft conditions and buried lies.

A study comparing glass particles to bunker sands revealed that glass-derived sand had statistically greater angle of repose and ball penetration resistance (these factors will be discussed below) when compared to four conventional bunker sands of comparable particle size (Owen et al, 2005). The glass-derived material was more stable because 34% and 58% of its particles were in the angular and very angular shape classifications, respectively, compared to only 21% and 0% of particles in the same categories for the conventional sands. The glass material also had lower sphericity. We’re not suggesting you use recycled glass for bunker sand, simply highlighting how these results emphasize the importance of sand particle shape for firm bunkers.

Another shape characteristic is particle roughness; however, this is not quantified in a lab. Crushed materials will have higher surface roughness and the combination of rough and angular particles will have greater propensity to pack and produce firmer conditions. However, when splashed from bunkers onto putting greens, approaches and collars, turf damage may occur from the grinding action that comes when foot traffic and routine maintenance pass over the splashed sand. Continued on next page
3. Uniformity coefficient
The uniformity coefficient (Cu) can be useful for predicting the relative firmness of sand by identifying if the material is narrowly or widely graded. A narrowly graded sand contains many particles of similar size and will have a relatively low Cu. Such material is more likely to produce buried lies and is more prone to erosion. Conversely, a widely graded sand is one that has particles of many different sizes and will generally produce firmer conditions due to the greater tendency for the sand to pack together. As a guideline, the Cu should range between 2.0-5.0. In a study by Bigelow and Hardebeck (2004), no meaningful relationship was detected between the Cu and the modified-penetrometer readings used for measuring firmness. However, Crum et. al. (2003) found a strong correlation between the Cu and bearing capacity—a measurement of material strength—in their study “Agronomic and Engineering Properties of USGA Putting Greens.” The researchers used a modified California Bearing Ratio testing device to quantify the firmness and stability of sand rootzone mixtures for putting greens. When the Cu increased from 1.8 to 3.0, bearing capacity doubled. While this test is not used to evaluate bunker sands, it demonstrates the value of the Cu for predicting material stability in this study.

While the Cu is important for predicting bunker sand firmness, it must be considered in conjunction with the other factors discussed in this article. For example, a high-Cu sand that is rounded may still result in soft conditions and buried lies, while an angular sand with a relatively low Cu may result in acceptable firmness. If the sand exhibits a low Cu value—i.e., less than 2—it should be very angular to angular if the goal is to avoid a high propensity for buried lies.

4. Infiltration rate
The physical soil testing laboratory community has suggested that the minimum infiltration rate for bunker sand is 20 inches per hour, which was based on the 20-24 inch per hour infiltration rate guideline in the 1993 USGA Recommendations for a Method of Putting Green Construction. However, in my experience testing bunker sands on golf courses, I’ve seen that infiltration rates often decrease...
significantly – e.g., from 22.8 to only 7.5 inches per hour – in just two to three years! Silt and clay from wind-blown dust, organic debris from clippings, leaves from trees or shrubs, algae growth and soil contamination all can decrease infiltration rates. Bunker sands that initially drain from 30-100 inches per hour should work well, depending on the climate and site conditions.

To read the article in its entirety, please click the link below.
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