

Never a dull moment

by Amy Volk Flowers

How exciting is it to be part of an 18 hole rebuild. Hunters Run Golf and Racquet Club is a 54 hole private golf club with resort style living located in Boynton Beach, Florida. There are three golf courses, the South Course which was renovated in 2001; the North Course which was renovated in 1998 and the East which is currently being rebuilt. There are 21 Hard Tru tennis courts, 5 restaurants and a Tiki bar. The property consists of 1000 acres. We are responsible for 483 acres.

those days 300 members were present! I surely was taken out of my comfort zone. Some people thrive on this- not me. I no longer had my khakis on with my polo shirt and tennis shoes. I was wearing my suit and high heels. The first meeting opened and our President, Ed Udine, and Mary Watkins Chief Operating Officer gave their presentations. Now it was my turn, the microphone was handed to me. This was the first time I ever had to use a microphone. Wow!!! After 5 days of

to see Ficus trees completely up rooted and blown over. This, of course, took several months to clean up. The second year, we were supposed to have tropical storm Wilma which turned into a category 3 hurricane. At this point, we were all tired of hurricanes. I would have thought there would be less damage since we had two hurricanes three weeks apart the previous year but we were not that lucky. Unfortunately, you do not realize the damage a hurricane can create until you have been through one.



Not only does our department oversee the three golf courses we are also responsible for the Clubhouse grounds, tennis grounds, common areas, lakes and both the front entrances.

Here at Hunters Run, we started working on our 18 hole rebuild late last summer. After months of work, preparing the justification for the rebuild of this 37 year old course, our work began. Our Chief Operating Officer, Mary Watkins set up 5 days of workshops for the membership. We knew it would be challenging to get membership approval because we were in the process of starting a 4.5 million dollar project of expanding and upgrading our clubhouse, pool and patio. The pressure was on us to explain to the membership the urgency of this rebuild. I never in my life thought I would be giving a presentation to more than 100 members each day. One of

presentations, the project was submitted to the membership for their approval. The hard work, the nervousness and the anticipation of the presentations were successful. The rebuild passed overwhelmingly. Eric Flechtner, who is the Superintendent on the East Course has been waiting for this day. This will be his third rebuild. Of course, we are just in the beginning phase of the rebuild with a long summer ahead of us but it will be exciting to have a golf course done the way we want it.

It seems that there is never down time or a dull moment at Hunters Run. I am sure I am not the only one who feels this way. I have been here now for 4 years and each year has brought its own challenges. The first year we experienced two hurricanes. We lost hundreds of trees; the roof to the maintenance facility blew off, which caused us to have water damage. It was amazing

The cleanup of debris is not the only issue. It is the damage to other structures, as well. Fences have to be repaired, roofs have to be repaired; cart paths were cracked due to heavy machinery. Even though you think everything is cleaned up, there is always something else. Still today, we have areas that need to be addressed. In year three, we had a lot of catching up to do. We planted 1600 trees on two of the three golf courses, and replaced the bunker sand. The fourth year, we entered into a drought, which most of the country is now facing. This drought has taught me how little water we actually need to use every day. Whether or not we have water restrictions in the future, we will continue to irrigate the way we are today and conserve as much water as possible. Currently, the club is looking into using 100 percent effluent water instead of the 500,000 gals a day we are contracted





Staff left to right: Tim Agett, Vernon Jones, Brian Bertke, Amy Volk Flowers, Adam Barrett and Scott Dulina
Kneeling: Joel Cairns and Eric Flechtner

for. It seems as though we are trying to change to better the use of a depleting natural resource but at the same time there are a lot of hoops to jump through. With all of this being said I wonder what Mother Nature will bring us next. Starting my fifth year we still have drought conditions.



Mary Watkins, Chief Operating Officer;
Amy Volk Flowers Director of
Golf Course Maintenance

My experience here at Hunters Run has taught me a lot about working closely with the Chief Operating Officer and the committee members. We have been able to continually upgrade and improve the golf courses. The Greens Committee's support and Mary Watkins understanding of golf course operations and their needs has helped in the completion of many projects. In the short time that I have been here, we have purchased many capital items. One of the capital expenses was to replace 30 of our existing irrigation satellite boxes. Our irrigation systems had irrigation heads doubled up per one station. This is a Superintendent's nightmare not having individual head control. There were low lying areas paired up with mounds. This made it difficult to water properly without causing wet spots. Another capital item we are working on is to wood bulkhead approximately 5000 linear feet of lake banks. After experiencing

the three hurricanes there was quite a bit of erosion and on top of that we had 7 inches of rain in 1 hour this past winter. This collapsed them even more. There are still many areas to improve upon as with all golf courses.

I feel very fortunate to work at Hunters Run. I am part of a management team. My opinions and decisions are respected and I am considered to be an integral part of Hunters Run operations. I not only enjoy the camaraderie which exists among managers but I also enjoy my rapport with the membership. The greens committee meets once a month and it is my opportunity to inform them about my experiences on the golf courses. They and all the members of Hunters Run are extremely supportive and open to change and renovation. It makes my position not only challenging but very rewarding to me.

Fortunately I have been lucky to have a great staff of Superintendents and Assistants to support me. All of us work well together and bring different ideas. We are very receptive and have a common goal to give the members the best possible playing conditions on a day to day basis. We are all aware that we still have a lot to accomplish here but we know that eventually it will get done. I always remember what Russ Myers, Superintendent at Southern Hills used to tell me "Think of the big picture".

A few people I spoke with prior to writing this article assumed I would write about a female in a male dominant industry. That was not the road I wanted to take. I feel that I am no different and I really have never thought about it. I have never had any issues about this and I do not anticipate any. Whether you are a man or a woman you still have the same pressures, stress, and politics to deal with everyday. Regardless of who you are, this business can be tough for many Superintendents and I try to roll with the punches one day at a time.



Amy Volk-Flowers
Hunters Run Golf & Racquet Club

"I look forward to receiving The Golf Course Trades every month. It has always, and continues to be a useful buying tool for me, plus the new stimpmeter section makes for great reading. Thank you all for letting me be part of it!"
Amy Volk Flowers

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Hunters Run Golf and Racquet Club, Boynton Beach, FL

Cover photo taken by Eric Flechtner

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