

PGMS
GROUNDS MANAGEMENT
Forum

The Professional Grounds Management Society



Washington, D.C. - Smithsonian National Zoological Park

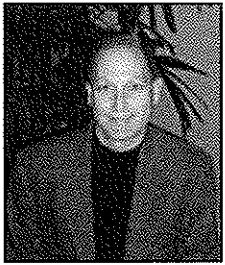
Washington, D.C. is home to many historical sites that are visited by millions of people each year and the 163-acre urban park known as The Smithsonian National Zoological Park is no exception.

The Zoo, with Disneyland, another Green Star winner, is profiled in this issue of *PGMS Forum*.

(See page 6 for more details on these 2008 Green Star Award recipients)

“Professionals on
the Cutting Edge”

PGMS MEMBER PROFILE



PGMS member profile's goal is to highlight active members of our society. The biggest benefit of membership is the ability to network and interact with fellow members, by profiling the society's most active members we want you to feel more comfortable networking and meeting these members. Member profile has been part of past issues of the Forum for a number of years, most recently hosted by George Van Haasteren Jr., CGM who did an excellent job. Now John Van Etten hosts the interviews.

This month's member profile is of **John A. Burns**. Burns was part of the dynamic Texas team that hosted the last successful regional school in Dallas. He is the landscape manager at the University of Texas at Austin. Burns has been a PGMS member for six years. He was interviewed by **John Van Etten, CGM**.

JVE: John, how did you choose this profession?

JB: I began working for the Tulsa, Oklahoma park department when I was in high school during the summers. I enjoyed working with plants so I realized my passion for horticulture. To this day I am glad I made the decision to be in a profession I enjoy, so everyday it is fun to go to work!

JVE: Where did you earn your degree?

JB: I got my degree from Oklahoma State University.

JVE: Do you utilize the PGMS list serv and what other ways do you network with members?

JB: I do use the list serve and contribute my knowledge wherever I can. PGMS has provided an avenue to interact with other landscape professionals from across the country. Through this network of professionals I have been able to bench mark through conversations, e-mails and I have taken opportunities to visit other campuses when I have attended PGMS regional meetings.

JVE: John, as a board member what are your personal goals for PGMS and what issues are important to you as a grounds manager?

JB: My goals are to increase membership in the South Central Region and more specifically in the state of Texas. Overall for PGMS I would like to see a greater awareness of the Society by other entities across the country. If this goal is achieved, I believe it would bring more prestige to PGMS, which in turn would make everyone's membership in PGMS more important. An issue that is important to me is sustainability efforts.

JVE: Does being actively involved with the Society give you additional opportunities to grow professionally?

JB: Being active has propelled me to be more involved with topics that are in the developmental stages for our industry. Some of these topics will become part of our daily routine in the future and that will keep us on the cutting edge of professionalism. A few of these topics are sustainability and a new Tree Campus USA program.

JVE: John, part of being active goes beyond our planning meetings and goals as directors, how does attending regionals and the GIE benefit you as a professional? How do you make the most of these opportunities?

JB: Education is important to everyone in our department, opportunities for education benefit everyone from entry level to management and overall allow us to improve the final end product. The opportunity for each person to expand their knowledge gives them the platform to move up in our organization. Managers are able to keep up with current trends and continue to improve their skills. We utilize the GIE to discover and research new products and equipment. The biggest opportunity is to meet face to face with members and begin the networking process.

JVE: John, you won a Green Star Award, what impact did it have on you and your department?

JB: It provided amazing feedback from many areas of our campus. I feel it provided an immediate recognition that we are doing something right and the perception has changed from those guys are just grounds keepers to WOW - that landscape group is a team of professionals!

JVE: What other professional organizations do you belong to?

JB: I belong to Texas Turf Grass Association, Texas Nursery & Landscape Association and the University Landscape Manager Association (Texas).

JVE: John, tell me some fun things about you things you enjoy, your family, etc.

JB: I have been married to the most wonderful wife in the world for 33 years and we have two beautiful daughters and two great sons-in-laws and on top of that we have three super stupendously outstanding wonderful grandchildren. I love to play racquetball and tennis. I also love gardening (which makes my job most enjoyable).

JVE: John, thanks for your time! I would also like to congratulate you and Kevin Dillard, CGM and the Texas Branch on a fine regional in March of 2008!

JB: You are welcome!