

These larger conventions usually have many university level speakers and researchers who disseminate the latest information from their current projects. These sessions are usually open to all conference attendees and are grouped by general topics like "southern turf management" or "public golf."

I like that these presentations are only twenty to sixty minutes long so you can see and hear a lot of information in a morning or afternoon session and even talk to the speaker. Since everyone attending these sessions is looking for answers to similar problems the possibility of discussion and idea exchange is very high.

The other type of education at these conferences is specific in-depth one or two-day seminars. These are usually very specific in nature. They are taught in a classroom setting by experts in that particular field. Many of these classes that I have attended are of college level quality.

There is usually a separate charge for these seminars, and in the case of the GCSAA Conference you had better make

your reservations early or they may be sold out.

You always receive supplemental printed matter and course syllabus that can be used for future reference.

Certified superintendents can earn continuing education credits by taking an examination at the end of the GCSAA classes.

Most conferences offer speakers who are motivational as in the case of GCSAA's opening night keynote speaker. Many of the speakers are not related directly to golf, but rather they deliver positive messages about overcoming obstacles, believing in yourself and being successful.

Their role is to get the convention off on a positive note.

The FTGA & GCSAA have done excellent jobs of getting top notch panels to discuss timely topics such as environmental relations and product comparisons.

The GCSAA has brought in national politicians, famous media personalities and top level environmentalist to sit on these various panels.

This year's Environmental General Session on February 8th looks very interesting.

Then there is the Trade Show. The show of shows. The perfect opportunity to see the latest in turf technology and sometimes non-turf technology. I have seen everything from electric triplex greensmowers to chairs with built-in back massagers.

There are two things you need to remember when attending a trade show.

First, wear comfortable shoes for the ten-mile walk you will take.

Second, remember that you are wearing a name tag and that salesman shaking our hand is not your long lost childhood friend but rather a professional at marketing who can read your name tag.

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*by Mike Hamilton, CGCS
Grey Oaks Country Club*

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fect his or her skills. No one gets better at anything unless they are educated by some means, either by being taught in some fashion or through experience.

I am a very strong believer in the philosophy that most people have to be taught how to learn, and taught how to succeed.

If you ask the superintendents with the most prestigious jobs how they got to where they are, I would bet a very large percentage would tell you they had great teachers. The most noticeable characteristic of most all of these superintendents is that they themselves are great educators and they preach professionalism.

Our industry has grown tremendously in the past 50 years in both respect and compensation for the superintendent. The people in the industry most responsible for that growth have been those who are great educators and who act professionally. One problem we have as an industry is that the percentage of these leaders is not as high as it could be.

Can you imagine how much money all of us would make and how good our jobs would be if 100% of our superinten-

dents shared these same characteristics? I truly believe those characteristics can be taught to most people! Therefore, it is our responsibility to our profession to educate our people, especially the youth.

When I was in high school, I was not a joiner. Although I was involved in athletics, I was not involved in any clubs or other extra curricular activities.

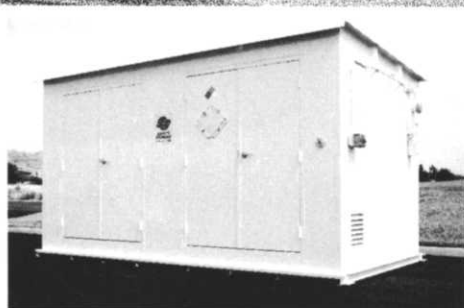
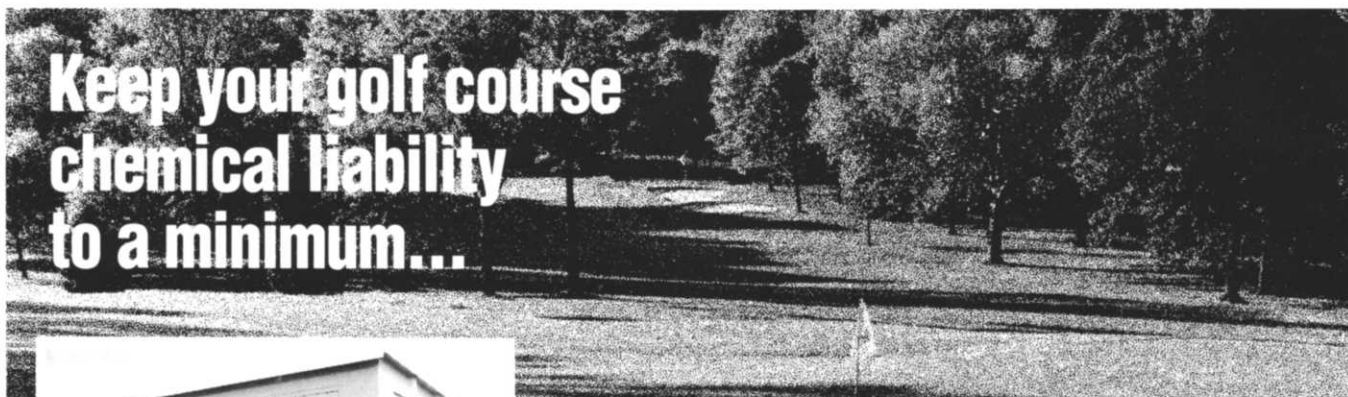
I was not into education. My grades bordered on failure. I was on the road to mediocrity. I believe the reason was because I was never taught how to succeed.

I started working on a golf course in my sophomore year in high school. When I began showing signs that I had an interest in the industry, the superintendent started taking me to meetings and teaching me as much as he could. He encouraged me to further my education with college, and he constantly preached to me about a professional image.

If it were not for that man, I would not be where I am today.

Because of the tutelage I received when I was young, and the fact that I was allowed to attend meetings, it has always been second nature for me to continually

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The dedication of the Envirotron, a turf research facility at the University of Florida, is but one example of superintendents partnering with industry to fund research that will help educate themselves and other turf managers in more effective and efficient methods.



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For a more detailed description of seminars, with dates and registration forms, please refer to your GCSAA Professional Development Catalog 1995-96. You may also reference your monthly issue of *Golf Course Management*.

Watch your mail for reminder post-cards highlighting seminars in your area!



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educate myself and my staff. I also feel it is my responsibility to get involved in helping to build our professional image.

Yes, it is a lot of extra work, but it is a payback to a profession that has rewarded me and my family tremendously. If I had not had that professionalism influence when I was young, I'm sure I would have fallen into my old natural pattern on not getting involved.

If any of my efforts have helped any association I was in, even in a small way, wouldn't have been a shame if I had never participated?

I start by letting the employee do every job on the golf course for a certain period of time. That period is dependent on how long they plan to be with me.

I let them spend a little more time on the specialty positions like spray tech, irrigation tech, service tech and administrative assistant. I even let them act as the assistant superintendent for a week.

During the time they are with me, I require them to read turfgrass books and take tests on the materials they read. I take the technical information and relate

it to the practical applications on the course.

I also let them attend at least one superintendent's meeting while they are with me. After that meeting while the experience is fresh in their minds, they get my involvement and professionalism speech. In the last few weeks of training, I help them prepare a resume.

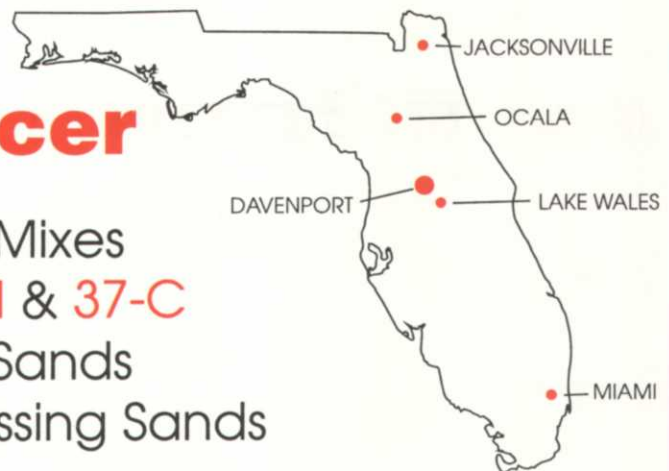
I then interview them. If the person does not interview well, I make suggestions and interview them again and again if necessary. After I feel they interview well, I will then negotiate with them. Again I do it until I feel they have learned good negotiating skills. The final process is for the students to critique the training program, so I can see where improvements can be made.

Many of you may think this kind of a training program is too much work or a waste of time. I don't. I have seen some very positive results. I believe that if I can help one person the way I was helped, and they become a fellow crusader to raise our professional standards, then the time I spent was well worth it!

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