ASSISTANT SUCCESS GUIDE

HOW TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE WHEN IT COMES TO DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS, CAREER MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.

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Reduce Costs
Economic times may be tough, but golfers still expect pristine conditions. Manage the budget and expectations by seeding the Penn bents — specified by architects and superintendents more than any other bentgrasses in the world.

Do the Math.

Not Expectations

Economic times may be tough, but golfers still expect pristine conditions. Manage the budget and expectations by seeding the Penn bents — specified by architects and superintendents more than any other bentgrasses in the world.

Do the Math.
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Personal responsibility
I read Mr. Schuknecht’s piece in the October issue (page 10) and had to thank him for his insight and willingness to call us all to be personally responsible. His assessment that we alone are responsible for how we handle adversity, how we chose to act and react is spot on. It’s not the drive to shine the light on oneself that matters, it’s being able to give that energy to others that makes true champions. He should take heart in knowing that this ability to be honest and having the fortitude to call others into action will serve him well as he advances on his chosen career path.

Ron Dahlin, CGCS
The Meadows Golf Club
at Grand Valley State University
Allendale, Mich.

Weathering the storm
That was a great Q&A with Dean Graves (October, page 20). I’m impressed he has weathered the storm of this industry so well and is successful. He’s been a great communicator and handled the PR and politics well. We need more like him. Hopefully, young assistants or those currently in college will read Pat Jones’ article and take it to heart. Well done!

John C. Cummings, CGCS
Elkview, W.V.

Traveling man
I find that the Travels with Terry columns are one of the most informative pieces in Golf Course Industry magazine. They often help me out. Thanks to Terry Buchen.

Mark Martinez
Golf course superintendent
Scherwood Golf Course
Schererville, Ind.

Cheers for Michigan
I’m a native Michigander and my blood runs green. A few of us golf course architects left the state at one time or another and at times wonder why we did. I’m extremely partial to Michigan and thanks to Monroe Miller’s article (August, page 14) for touching on golf, MSU, turf and notable players, supers and architects in the state for making me proud.

John Harvey, ASGCA, ASLA
Golf Course Architect
The RBA Group, Inc.
Parsippany, N.J.

Thanks to Monroe Miller for writing about “good news from Michigan” (August, page 14). Many of the names you had mentioned have been pioneers for this industry and people I have looked up to throughout my career. They represent what this part of the industry is all about: Helping others. Golf has been fortunate to have these individuals, as well as others, be caretakers of the game.

Daniel J. Bissonette
Golf course superintendent
Walloon Lake Country Club
Petoskey, Mich.

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CRINGEWORTHY

The other day a superintendent responded to an e-mail I sent him with the one-liner that sends shudders down my spine. For me, it’s like the sound of nails on a chalkboard or the thought of chewing on tissue. It’s just plain cringeworthy.

"Your welcome," the superintendent wrote.

Many of you are cringing yourselves. The rest of you are probably scratching your heads, wondering what’s wrong. Those of you in the latter group are missing the point, and it may be hurting your careers. Why? It’s "you’re welcome." Always. It’s never, ever "your welcome." It’s my coworker’s, and young professionals, too.

People at all levels of the business world are guilty of grammatical incorrectness – it’s not just the occasional superintendent. It’s my coworkers (not fellow editors, though!), marketing practitioners and personal acquaintances. It’s older folks, middle-aged people and young professionals, too. Although those who’ve come of age texting, Facebooking, Tweeting are entering the workforce more grammatically challenged than the generations before them (soon we’ll be worrying about the widespread use of "ur welcome").

You may be thinking that proper grammar doesn’t matter because it doesn’t affect how well you grow grass or manage a budget. You’re wrong.

Grammar is about credibility. If your resume and cover letter are fraught with yours that should be you’re or there’s that should be theirs, it reflects poorly on you and it might prevent you from landing an interview. Potential employers know that grammatical mistakes may reflect several things: You’re careless, you’re not well educated or you’re unprofessional. Any or all of these may mean you have other bad habits, you’re not detail-oriented or that you’d present badly at green committee meetings or in your interactions with owners. You don’t want any of those assumptions being made about you, do you?

As a takeaway message, I offer my Most Cringeworthy Grammar Mistakes List:

YOUR/YOU’RE
• Your is a possessive pronoun ("your course").
• You’re is a contraction for you are ("you’re welcome"). Contractions are easy if you remember that the apostrophe replaces the omitted letter. In you’re, the apostrophe replaces the a in are, which is why it’s always “you’re welcome.”

PLURALS & POSSESSIVES
• In almost all cases, you make words plural by adding an s or es. Apostrophes don’t make words plural; they indicate possessiveness.
  Hence, the plural of employee is employees, not employee’s.
  • To make a singular word possessive, simply add an apostrophe ("crew’s equipment").
  • It gets tricky when the word ends in s. For proper nouns like names, add an apostrophe ("Russ’ computer"). Add an ‘s to make a singular common noun possessive ("boss’s plan"). However, if the next word starts with an s, only add an apostrophe ("boss’ schedule").

THERE/THERE/THey’RE
• There refers to a place ("over there"). This may be a silly way to remember it, but an English teacher once taught me that there refers to a place, and both words end in the letter e.
  • Their is a plural possessive pronoun ("their house"). Again, a weird tip: Their refers to people, it contains the letter i and I am a person.
  • They’re is a contraction for “they are.” In they’re, the apostrophe replaces the letter a in are.

IT’S/ITS
• It’s is a contraction for it is. ("It’s my job.")
• Its is a possessive pronoun, which means it functions like other pronouns such as his, her and their. ("The mower was at the end of its life.")

Got it? Now that we have that settled, I feel much better. You’re welcome. GCI

Marisa Palmieri Senior editor
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Tavis Norton is an assistant superintendent at Birmingham Country Club in Michigan. He can be reached at horton31@aol.com.

GETTING INVOLVED

I believe learning takes place everywhere – not just at work, but within your local or national association, church, community group or athletic team. It all comes under the heading of getting involved.

Getting involved is an excellent way to prepare you for the next level of being a golf course superintendent. By getting involved in golf industry initiatives you develop relationships with peers, superintendents, industry partners, golf course owners, managers and industry leaders who can serve as important connections in your career. Begin by getting involved with your local association. This involvement:

• Reflects your well-roundedness. Involvement in your local association shows employers that your skills extend beyond work.
• Provides you with unlimited opportunities to gain life and industry experiences, such as planning an event, running a meeting or building a team.
• Improves your time management skills. When you get involved in activities, you have more things to juggle and your time management skills improve.
• Improves your personal growth in areas such as leadership, interpersonal communications, problem solving and confidence.
• Secures future references. Networking develops relationships with other leaders who can assist you in your career development.
• Allows you to learn from association activities by sharing ideas and discussing industry trends that you can pass on to your team.

I have been an active member in my association for the last 10 years and I’m proud to be serving as an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association (MiGCSA). My experience has provided me with many opportunities to gain an understanding of statewide governance, the issues affecting the golf industry locally and nationally, and the role of politics in our industry. I’m very fortunate to have 12 superintendents on the board as mentors who support my involvement and respect my opinion in board discussions.

Assistant who demonstrate leadership abilities have a leg up on the competition, especially when competing against hundreds of applicants for that one superintendent position. I recently applied for a superintendent position and found myself competing against 125 other applicants. I wondered if I was going to receive an interview, or at the very least be noticed as a strong assistant among a list of qualified individuals. Unfortunately, I did not get the job but I did get an interview. Leadership qualities are in demand and I truly believe this is what made me stand out from the other qualified applicants.

Involvement in community groups can incorporate many of the beneficial activities described above, such as building connections with other people, learning new things and volunteering your time. From sporting teams and faith-based groups to rotary clubs and athletic teams, there are many options for broadening your skills. If you’re looking to make new friends, learn something new or gain or polish leadership skills, getting involved is a great way to accomplish these goals.

Getting involved has allowed me to interact with great people with different personal and professional backgrounds whether from being a member on the MiGCSA board, volunteering at my daughter’s school, writing articles for GCI or playing on my hockey team. At the end of the day, balance of family, work and extracurricular activities is crucial so make sure you have the time, passion and resources to make it an effective endeavor.
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Starting construction

Starting construction is always the ultimate high and I still love making site visits to see how my computer-generated ideas look in three dimensions as construction begins.

In the normal construction sequence, the contractor first moves in equipment, marks out environmentally sensitive areas to avoid and sets benchmarks and staking control points at tees, greens and landing zones. These help us all know exactly where things are.

I visit shortly thereafter to flag tree-clearing lines. Even with a clearing plan, the final clearing limits are determined in the field. Even on a partially wooded site like Firekeeper, it takes a few days, because I work forward and backward along the hole, saving specimen trees. One high-quality tree can cause us to re-do entire clearing lines, and move or redesign entire holes to make best use of the trees. It's difficult to stand those trees back up!

Early Scottish courses built on seaside links land were devoid of trees. American designers have gradually adapted courses to the American landscape, using trees both as backdrops and to provide strategic functions that surface hazards can't supply. Ground hazards like sand and grass bunkers, mounds and creeks can suggest shot patterns, but only trees can force shot patterns. Some still despise trees, calling them "sky bunkers," but we used them in several ways at Firekeeper. Trees:

- Located 180 to 200 yards from the tee match the apex of the parabolic flight pattern of a curved tee shot, best enabling a forced fade or draw.
- Gently encroaching one side of the fairway about 320 to 350 yards off the tee or just to one side of the green make golfers plan the tee shot to avoid them for the second shot. In the field design of the 10th hole, Notah Begay III, who's designing the course with me, removed one particularly tall tree to allow a reasonable chance to hit the green from behind the trees.
- That form a narrow tree chute force a straight shot.

There are also other considerations in tree clearing, such as clearing further on the east and south sides of tees and greens to allow morning sunlight and good air circulation and brushing to create wind slots. If you look closely, holes that run east and west have more clearing south than north and north/south holes. I also design cart path, bunkers and mounds, etc., on the east and south sides to fill the additional space. North/south holes are cleared wider for more midday sun access, but an exception is the par-5 14th because it uses a natural opening and because I wanted one narrow, tree-lined hole on the course.

Knowing we were going to have a triple-row irrigation system with 65-foot rows, the clearing width had to match irrigation coverage. Three rows will water 190 to 225 feet effectively, depending on tree cover and wind direction. Two-hundred-foot play corridors are tough on average golfers, while 225 feet is better and 250 feet is comfortable for most. Some open, crosswind areas needed four rows for coverage and tee areas and par-3 holes used only two rows to save sprinklers.

My corridors are gently curved for aesthetics and the "inside points" determine effective play width. Most holes should have only a few broad curves, with the distance between outside and inside points about 350 to 600 feet apart. Gentle curves (i.e. curving out about 14 to 20 feet in 200 feet of length depending on trees present) look best. The type of tree also affects clearing width, with tall straight pines suitable for narrower clearing than hardwoods.

The best part about clearing is seeing the hole without tripping over stumps, missing thorns or looking for snakes. It also means earthmoving is about to begin. That's like being a kid and playing in the sand box all over again.
IRRIGATION ISSUES

Erik Christiansen is a licensed irrigator and president of EC Design Group, an irrigation consulting and water management firm based in West Des Moines, Iowa. A board member for the American Society of Irrigation Consultants, Christiansen can be contacted at erik@ecdesigngroup.com.

BOOST PERFORMANCE WITH MINIMAL RESOURCES

Times are tough and you're not going to get that new irrigation system this year. But let's pretend that you just received a budget windfall - a 5-percent goose in capital funds over last year without any foreseeable increase in expenses. It's not a huge chunk, but an opportunity for upgrades.

Your turf maintenance equipment is in pretty good shape, so you've elected to dedicate the entire lump to irrigation. Finally, those recurring hotspots that show up on your approaches and collars can be more permanently addressed. Where to begin?

Most any irrigation consultant will suggest you begin, well, at the beginning. Where can you make the most effective and logical upgrades with limited funds that will affect the long-term performance of your irrigation system - and therefore your golf course? What single irrigation system component could yield the greatest results for your turf management program?

EVALUATE AND PONTIFICATE
You dust off your irrigation master plan that was tucked away for such an occasion and know exactly where to go based on system age, wear and overall performance. When considering new features, look toward your control systems first. Pump controls and a central/satellite upgrade can offer new heights of system control that will deliver efficiencies from the piping system to the base of the sprinklers.

Upgraded pump controls and logic can enable you to use your entire system more efficiently by maximizing your pump curves through the optimization of your hydraulic tree in each irrigation set, while keeping your main and laterals filled and pressurized more consistently. This is a significant move, so unless you're adept at reading pump curves and familiar with the technology, bringing in an outside professional might be in order.

Pump controls also should be considered if you wish to add an injection system to your irrigation set-up. Most superintendents find it cost effective to apply gypsum, wetting agents or other water-enhancing products through their irrigation systems in small, digestible increments, head by head.

Golf courses, particularly muni courses, take tremendous abuse throughout the season. Healthy root growth is important to turf's durability and resilience, so by injecting more frequently you can quickly rehabilitate stressed turf areas without worrying about manual product applications. Moreover, if you're dealing with water or soil pH problems, these tools, along with turf moisture/pH sensors can help establish and maintain the desired balance.

BRAIN POWER
As it relates to controls, it may be time to graduate to a new, digital, solid-state irrigation control system. Newer controllers are affordable and offer more features than most water managers are willing to use. But most manufacturers offer modularized features, so you can pick and choose your desired functions without buying the total package.

There's a wide selection of control systems available to you. Again, consult your master plan and consider all of your site's needs before you start looking at features. As a rule, if you upgrade your field satellites, always select a model that offers more stations than you currently need. For any golf project, future system expansion is inevitable.

Some sites might lend themselves to remote-control capabilities. Activating and programming irrigation from any point on the site can save precious time and grief, especially when troubleshooting irrigation systems or syringing. Larger facilities with multiple functions will find remote-control capabilities particularly helpful.

There are both universal and brand-specific remote control products out there that put power in your hand. Remote control capabilities are one of the more practical upgrades, but at the same time they're amazing time savers. Those who have them vow never to go without again - most state their handheld remote is the equivalent to additional staff.

Where can you make the most effective upgrades with limited funds that will affect the long-term performance of your system?

These are only a few on the list of opportunities to improve irrigation performance. Any upgrade that significantly affects system delivery and pressure - adding or changing sprinkler heads, zones, pump controls and so forth - needs to be carefully evaluated and accurately specified, so ensure you have access to an expert. If you ever get that budget bump, be ready. Need another good reason to properly plan for such an occasion? The green committee may only give you a short window to act and then the dollars could disappear.
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WE NEED A MUSEUM

During my youngest daughter’s kindergarten career (she’s 29 now), each student was asked to stand and tell about her family. Christie’s report was short and simple: “My mom likes to shop and my dad likes dead people.”

It was from the mouth of a babe – she meant that many of the trips we took and conversations we had were about the past. Family reunions, cemetery visits, museum trips, old books, antique collecting and nearly anything else connected with days gone by are the things that interest me.

National historical sites are spread all across America, and many small towns have their own local museums, frequently hosted by a core of volunteers whose local pride inspires them.

Sports museums are of tremendous interest to Americans, and I have been to most of them – Cooperstown, Springfield, Canton, South Bend (college football) and Newport (tennis). USGA Golf House and the World Golf Hall of Fame have huge appeal to those of us involved in this great game. Also, in the world of golf history, I love the small upstairs museum at the Foxburg Golf Club, the Jack Nicklaus Museum and the Wake Forest Collection of Arnold Palmer memorabilia.

But there’s a huge hole in the presentation of golf’s history, a gap made even more evident after my visit to the Turfgrass Information Center in Michigan this summer.

The TIC has done a wonderful job preserving the literature and science of golf turf and turfgrasses. It’s a collection that boggles the mind when you see it in person. We all have access to it, and more is available online every day.

I’m grateful for the vision of the USGA, turf faculty and other leaders who initiated the TIC project and kept it going in its early days.

What we don’t have, in a single site, is a golf course museum. We have individual collections, mostly small, and some company collections. A few institutions have some pieces, and I have seen small displays at the old Golf House Museum (equipment mostly loaned or donated by Mel Lucas). The GCSAA has some small equipment at its headquarters in Lawrence, Kan. Dr. Ken Payne and Michigan State have had antique pieces on display at the GCSAA conference in the past, and they were very interesting to see.

Wouldn’t it be cool to trace the history of cup cutting, and to have a collection of flags and sticks from around the country?

But I believe there would be great value and interest in consolidating all of these collections at a central site, under the management of a trained and experienced curator. Done carefully, this could be a destination visit for many involved in golf – players and professional staff – as well as the public in general.

And a case could be made for acting soon. A lot of the equipment from the middle part of the last century is being scrapped for lack of space and resources, both on the part of golf courses and distributors. Some is parked outside to rust in the weeds and weather.

The passing of time also sees the passing of superintendents and greenkeepers who can tell the stories of the early years in golf course management in our country. Golf is well over the century mark in America (121 years) and accurately telling the story becomes more difficult, although not impossible, as time moves away from 1888.

It would be a very formidable undertaking, given the physical size of golf course equipment. It would take a big building to house pickup trucks, tractors, gang mowers, F-6s and Parkmasters, and even sickle mowers.

My meager imagination races when I think about displays tracing the history of golf course aerification, irrigation and spraying. We could have mockups of golf course shops from 1900, 1950 and 2000. Wouldn’t it be cool to trace the history of cup cutting, and to have a collection of flags and sticks from around the country? Bunker raking, from hand rakes to the Stan Clarke Power Rake, or through the hydraulic machines of today and back to hand raking would be instructive.

Each year we could have a summer field day with demonstrations of older equipment. The events would involve competitions in mowing, sod cutting, cup cutting and championship racing with Cushmans and Red Ryders and other old trucksters.

Who is going to do this? I don’t know. Where? I don’t know this, either. Maybe the GCSAA or the USGA or the World Golf Hall of Fame. Maybe it will take a consortium of organizations. We could all contribute, though, of our time, our resources and even some of our personal golf course treasures. I know one gal who would be extremely happy to see our basement and our garage emptied and donated to a world-class golf course museum – the American Museum of Golf Course Management.

I wonder if I’ll live long enough to see it.
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EMERGING INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS

As part of the KPMG 2008 Golf Travel Insight report conducted in spring 2008, more than 80 specialist golf tour operators in 21 countries were surveyed to find out where they thought the most popular destinations would be in the coming years.

Portugal and Spain, already established tourist destinations, remain firm favorites. However, some surprising destinations are catching up fast.

Turkey ranked third on the list of future golf hot spots, and was closely followed by Dubai – despite figures that reveal the United Arab Emirates has the most expensive green fees in the entire EMA region.

The news for established golf destinations such as Scotland and Ireland was not so good, as operators expect stagnation in inbound golf tourism here.

"From our research it seems well established destinations are not losing market share thanks to their deep golfing traditions and the quality of their golf, but the growing competition doesn’t leave much room for further growth," says Andrea Sartori, head of KPMG’s Golf Advisory Practice for the EMA region. "Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia were widely tipped as emerging destinations, and the quality of service in the U.S., combined with a favorable exchange rate at the time of the survey, makes America very attractive to European holiday golfers."

Source: KPMG Golf Advisory Practice's Golf Travel Insight in EMA 2008

### Hot spots for golf tourism in upcoming years

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Source: Golf Travel Insight 2008

### How golf tourists choose their golf destination

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<th>Feature</th>
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<td>Gastronomy</td>
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<td>Relaxing surroundings</td>
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<td>Entertainment &amp; nightlife</td>
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Source: Golf Travel Insight 2008

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INTERVIEWING EQUIPMENT TECHNICIANS

I've received quite a few requests from superintendents who were going to be interviewing new equipment managers and wanted to know what they should look for and how to tell if the person they are hiring is the right fit for their property. Here are some important interview questions for superintendents to understand what type of technician they’re getting:

What are some career goals you’d like to reach in the next five years?
With this question, you’re looking to find out if the person is goal oriented; typically, successful people set goals. While listening to the candidates’ responses, see if any of the attributes they tell you correspond with what you’re looking for in the position. For instance, if one of my goals were to achieve a certification, you would be able to recognize that I’m motivated and interested in learning more about my profession. If I said I wanted to make $150,000 a year, you’d know that my drive would be towards making money.

What do you feel are the key components to running a successful operation?
This question reveals the individuals’ expectations and gives you an idea about their management styles. If I said I feel the key components are cutting unit set-up, organization, and communication, you would know that I think setting up cutting units to give a good quality of cut is one of my driving factors and that I would expect people to be organized and be able to communicate with each other effectively.

What type of improvements do you see that you could make to our operation?
This is one of the tough questions because most of the time no one wants to hear someone else’s opinion on what he or she isn’t doing correctly. However, it’s very important. You need to know if the person coming into the position has vision or not – if he or she can see past all the bad things and identify the possibilities. While it may be difficult to take criticism, keep in mind that the people who the individual feels he or she is best at. Everyone will have weaknesses; it’s the strengths you want to focus on. When you look at the players in college football making their transition to the NFL, many of them will not be playing the same positions they played in college. Some quarterbacks will become wide receivers and some wide receivers may become cornerbacks. It’s because the

It’s important to get a good understanding of the people you’re interviewing so you can get a sense of what drives them and what holds them back.

What made you decide to get into the equipment management side of the business?
This is another important question. Here you will find out where this individual started his career and what choices steered him in his current direction. Maybe he plays golf (huge benefit) or maybe he was in the automotive industry and wanted a change – another plus because this tells you that his mechanical skills should be excellent. It’s important to get a good understanding of the people you’re interviewing so you can get a sense of what drives them and what holds them back.

What do you feel are your strengths?
This question will give you insight to coaches want the best players on the field for that position to help build the best team. Coaches don’t spend time working on what players can’t do; they maximize the things they do well to help them be that much better. This question will help you identify the strengths so you will know the talents of your new hire.

There are many different personalities and thoughts when it comes to maintaining golf course equipment, and there is no one formula that’s going to get you the best person. However, if you take the time to really listen to the answers to these questions, they will tell you if the personality of your staff and the individual will work well together. They also will reveal what your applicant is really looking for in a position – just another job or a career. Hopefully these pointers will help you select the right applicant for your position and help raise the standards of your facility to where you feel they should be. GCI
If you work in the turf business and you’ve never heard of Dr. Milt Engelke, you should probably go find a new profession.

Engelke has been an innovator in research and education in the industry for nearly four decades. Think buffalograss. Think zoysiagrass. Think Texas A&M – and you pretty much have to think of the man known as Dr. Milt to thousands of superintendents worldwide.

Like so many turfheads, Engelke came off of a Wisconsin dairy farm. But, unlike most, he majored in physics as an undergrad at Plattsville College. Despite the high-end academics, he spent summers and free time working with his hands and became a licensed plumber and learned all he could about electric, HVAC and carpentry. That paid off when he was drafted in 1968 and, instead of going to the jungles of Vietnam, ended up in El Paso working on rocket electronics. Easy to see how he’d end up as one of the world’s leading turf authorities, huh?

But, he jumped over into ag thanks to a fascination with genetics. To make a long career story short, he moved from Wisconsin to Oklahoma to Mexico. During his time south of the border, he focused on wheat hybridization and worked with the recently deceased Nobel laureate, Dr. Norman Borlaug.

Finally, after a brief stint in private turf breeding, he ended up at Texas A&M in 1980. “They hired me in May of 1980,” Engelke recalls. “I had really enjoyed private industry and began to understand the necessity of getting plant materials into the marketplace. My job was to work on St. Augustinegrass and other native grasses – St. Augustine was about 40 percent of the lawns in South Texas at the time – and everyone wanted
a cooler-season version for North Texas. So, I did that and also began working with buffalograss. I made a road trip from North Dakota on down to Texas and eventually developed Prairie buffalograss out of it. The whole thing cost $20,000 to develop and, to date, has returned nearly a million dollars to the university.

We caught up with Dr. Milt as he continues to grow into his new role heading up A&M’s urban sustainability program.

It just figures that a man who started with physics and moved into the world of grasses is now moving far beyond turf as associate director of A&M’s Urban Solutions Center.

Where exactly are you now?
The Urban Solutions Center is 180 miles north of the A&M campus. You’d think it would be Siberia, but I have all the sciences working together right here with me. There are no silos or barriers. We’re trying to solve problems that go way beyond golf or turf, but turf represents a huge opportunity in so many ways.

You’re not really just a turf guy anymore. Tell us about it.
Right now, I’m focused on sustainability, and sustainability in our world is germ plasm. It’s just like Rutgers where Dr. (Reed) Funk created such a diverse library of germ plasm. Had we not maintained the old germ plasm and kept it from being dumped, who knows where we’d be today. We can’t lose those genetic resources.

What’s the one thing that’s made you successful?
I hired people better than me. I didn’t need another me. I needed someone better who could complement me and eventually replace me.

Mike Kenna (now of USGA) was the first. He worked on zoysia. Virginia Lehman did bentgrass. David Huff, Richard Light, Jen Markham... I know I’m forgetting a bunch, but I’ve been incredibly lucky to have people who brought talents in that we didn’t have.

Turf science has taken you all over the world. What are some of the most eye-opening things you’ve experienced?
Well, the Far East is always wild. Jack Murray and I went there in 1982. Korea was the most interesting. We went from one field with people using oxen to another a half mile away where they were using modern tractors.

The place where I collected a lot of original zoysia specimens is now covered by an airport. It’s more proof that urbanization of the world is destroying a lot of our genetic resources. Urbanization is a worldwide challenge for any of us in agriculture. It impacts everyone.

How does the science of breeding compare now to when you got started?
I think we’re not as far as we should be. (Dr. Jim) Beard said 30 years ago to make sure you don’t lose sight of water (as a breeding issue) and we still have a long way to go on that. It absolutely has to be our priority moving ahead.
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Also, we didn’t understand what the power of molecular science could bring to us, so we’re still not where we should be in that arena. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to work with, but molecular breeding is a way of fast-tracking Mother Nature. But, because of the problems we’ve had with pollen containment, etc., we’ve ended up dragging around a boat anchor that’s preventing us from making progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that the problems we’ve had with pollen containment, etc., we’ve ended up dragging around a boat anchor that’s preventing us from making progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost. It’s not the salvation, but it’s another tool. You still have to have germ plasm to progress. (Breeders) failed to recognize that Mother Nature was still going to rule the roost.

We’ll overcome it eventually.

We’re finally overcoming some of the barriers and starting to learn how to take advantage of the host of consistent DNA sequences. Our team is now inserting genes into plant materials all the time – just like Monstanto – and it turns out the genetic characteristic was already there in many cases – it was just turned off. The question is how to turn the sequences on and off.

We’re making baby steps, but I think the USDA will eventually get comfortable with this because it’s not introducing new sequences – it’s all native. We’re just taking advantage of inherent gene components.

Look into your crystal ball... What new varieties/standards for turf will we see in 10 years? 20 years?

Our new varieties are all targeted at concerns about natural resources. Water, heat dissipation, etc. We’re working hard on living filtration systems to take brackish water and clean it up through natural processes. You’ll hear more and more about zoysias that live in a saline environment that can pull the salt out of the soil and remediate the water and the soils. Salt extraction will be a hot new topic.

If you can preserve the soil, it’s a phenomenal way to remove salt. Diamond zoysia is one of the most salt-tolerant plants you’ll ever find. The zoysias will give us a whole different concept about how to manage salts and water.

You’ve known the man forever so give us your best Jim Beard story.

I have plenty, but here’s the most recent. Just a few weeks ago, I read an obituary in the newspaper for a “James Beard” from Bryan, Texas – the same town Jim lives in – and I just about had a heart attack. Then I noticed that the deceased was 101. I was much relieved.

Jim Beard was one of the reasons I came to Tex along with Al Turgeon (now of Penn State). They were among the best in the world. Garald Horst (now of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln) was in El Paso, too. It was a bird’s nest on the ground in terms of wonderful people. In 1980, Jim Beard said we need to understand one thing: Water is king. He was right. Thirty years later, that’s all we’re talking about. But we were our own worst enemy.

What one thing haven’t you accomplished that you wish you could have?

I submitted a design concept to build a sustainable course for patent protection and they just can’t seem to understand the concept. The biggest nemesis for most superintendents is the perception that aerification or other cultural practices screw things up. My idea is to create a “chameleon” facility. It’s a golf course that you could change from day to day. You could take a green, tee or fairway out of play to rest when it needs it. For every nine holes you need to build 11. Eighteen holes becomes 22. With the technology we have today, we can do that. It’s cheaper, better, more interesting and actually creates more places to put houses. Unfortunately, it just doesn’t work with the economy and couldn’t get past a bull-headed patent examiner. Maybe it’ll get built internationally.

Also, I’m frustrated that zoysia hasn’t been used more on major sports venues. It’s so wear-tolerant, but someone really has to grab the bull by the horns and market it. It doesn’t wear out and it’s so shade and salt tolerant. Lot’s of people are looking at Diamond and are so amazed about how well it works for sports.

Finally, the (EPA’s) WaterSense program is kind of a tragedy because it limits the amount of grass we use instead of which grasses we use. There are too many benefits to turf to limit our acreage because of misconceptions about turf. That’s what we’re working on today with the Urban Solutions Center here at A&M. Just Google “urban living laboratory” and check out what we’re doing in terms of sustainability that combines LEED ideas with our standards for plant materials. It’s a huge, ambitious project that will eventually become a global research facility.

How do students today compare to those of a decade or so ago?

They don’t know the basics. They have wonderful book learning. It’s like the reverse of Doug Petersan (of the Austin Golf Club).
When it comes to course appearance, there is no trophy for second place. That's why we developed new Reserve™ Fungicide. Reserve delivers superior, broad-spectrum disease control without turf thinning that other fungicides can cause. Reserve prevents algae growth and controls just about everything under the sun including dollar spot, brown patch, snow mold, and anthracnose. And thanks to Reserve's StressGard™ formulation technology, it helps manage course stress, maintains
turf roots and improves turf density. Of course new Reserve is Backed by Bayer, which means all of our research and support is at your fingertips to help you create the healthiest, thickest, greenest turf possible. Because when it comes to your course, good enough isn’t good enough. To learn more, go to www.BackedbyBayer.com/Reserve.
He's a minimalist who maximizes performance because he understands the biology of the local ecosystem. The book learning isn't enough. They need more exposure to the guys like Doug who've been out there. Throwing water at stuff doesn't solve the problem.

What's the most common question you get from stressed-out superintendents?

"How do I do more with less and get away with it." If we understand the resiliency of the plants on golf courses we can do more with less. Take diseases for example. Everyone's always looking for which disease is the culprit. Sometimes, it's a cultural problem like salt in the irrigation water. It's too easy to fall into the "program" mentality and not really consider what the root problem is. Watering is often the last thing you should do and most green chairmen just don't understand that. The pressure to perform is contrary to using serious biology to manage the turf.

Then what's the most common problem?

Greens fail because the soil porosity doesn't change. You lose macropores and increase micropores. The problem is simple: too much water, not enough oxygen. When I started working with Jacobsen in 1987, they came out with the bayonet or vent tine. That technology literally manufactures macropores. You can better sustain microbial activity and microbes digest organic matter. Sometimes a holistic, sustainable, minimal approach is better than "wonder juice."

What do you do for non-turf fun?

Woodworking and fishing. Ken Mangum (of Atlanta Athletic Club) recently built a new course and had to cut down a couple of old growth cherry and black walnut trees. We had them shipped out here and I built my kitchen cabinets out of the cherry and several pieces of furniture out of the walnut. I used damned near every bit of those trees. We also have a 4,000-square-foot Diamond zoysia putting green at home, but that's another story.

Tell us about the happiest day of your life.

Years ago, I actually bought a DeLorean. I was on cloud nine, man. Yet, the second happiest day of my life was when I swapped it for a 2002 T-Bird. I've always been an early adopter, but sometimes you have to realize it wasn't the right decision.

Final question...what's next for you?

Fishing! In Oregon. Bye! 601
ASSISTANT SUCCESS GUIDE:
SURVIVING AND THRIVING

It's not easy being an assistant superintendent who's ready to move on to your own facility.

Matt Rostal, golf course superintendent at Interlachen Country Club, Edina, Minn., sums it up well: "There are so many qualified people, so little jobs."

The golf course construction boom of the 1990s piqued students' interest in turfgrass management as a career, but the decline of rounds has led to a decrease in the number of jobs. Meanwhile, universities continue to churn out turf grads, making competition for existing assistant and superintendent jobs very tough.

On top of the sheer math making it difficult to be an aspiring superintendent today, the role of the "new" assistant is changing as the superintendent's off-the-course demands increase.

"The superintendent is taking more and more of a management/communication role and the assistant is assuming more day-to-day operational control of the maintenance staff," says consultant Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, president of Golf Agronomy International.

An increase in regulations and business demands of the superintendent profession have contributed to these changes, says Joe Livingston, CGCS, River Crest Country Club, Fort Worth, Texas.

While the actual skill set an assistant needs to take the next step to become a superintendent hasn't changed, the odds of doing so have. As such, assistants need to stay on top of industry advancements, sharpen their management skills and hone their professional conduct to have a shot at the superintendent job they're looking for.

We hope the stories in this guide help. Let us know what you think and send your ideas for next year to gci@gie.net.
ADVICE YOU SHOULDN'T FORGET

Industry members dole out do’s and don’ts for assistants to use in day-to-day operations.

Career advancement advice runs thick for assistant superintendents in the golf course industry (in fact, we provide some more on page 31). But what about the day to day? What practical nuggets do you need to know about managing the golf course, running the crew and being a great assistant overall?

We cast our net to compile this compendium of advice from industry members nationwide.

By Marisa Palmieri

DO

Do everything you can to treat your employees with the utmost respect. They are typically the ones working for the lowest wage and working under the most difficult conditions and the longest hours. Never miss an opportunity to say thank you to them for what they do.

- Paul Jett, CGCS, Pinehurst (N.C.) No. 2

Start a journal of the daily activities at the course. You won’t be able to remember everything you did and when or how you did it. The journal of agronomic activities will be invaluable when you get the opportunity to be in charge.

- John Kaminski, assistant professor of turfgrass science at Penn State

Dress for success. Make sure the members can determine who is the worker and who is the boss. Shave everyday and look neat.

- Matt Schaffer, director of golf operations, Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, Pa.

Always work on doing it right the first time.

- Ron Dahlin, CGCS, The Meadows Golf Club at Grand Valley State University

Have a positive attitude toward the superintendent and the staff. The staff takes on the personality of the assistant, so a positive assistant leads to a positive and productive staff.

- Chad Miller, superintendent, Hillcrest Golf & Country Club, Batesville, Ind.

Keep up with the latest research findings not only from your state or region, but from all over the nation. A number of local golf course maintenance departments and the membership/customer is strong. An ally in the clubhouse goes a long way to that end, as the face time the pro shop personnel has with customers dwarfs the time the maintenance folks have.

- Bruce Gregory, PGA, CGCS, Liberty (Ind.) Country Club

Be “fair, firm and friendly,” in that order, when dealing with subordinates. You’re a boss and not their best buddy.

- Tom Brown, CGCS, Chesapeake Bay Golf Club, Rising Sun, Md.

Play golf at your facility. This will give you a completely different perspective of the agronomic and playability issues at your facility. Seeing the course through the golfer’s eyes is a great way to fine tune your agronomic practices.

- Doug Soldat, assistant professor, Department of Soil Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison

If you use tobacco now, QUIT; it only gets harder.

- Matt Rosenthal, superintendent, Interlachen Country Club, Edina, Minn.

Manage people for success; be a great teacher.


Come to work at least a half hour before the staff so you are ready for changes.

- Matt Schaffer
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Consider clever ideas to reduce costs in labor and eliminate overtime, like two shifts, part-time workers on afternoons and weekends and section workers to eliminate wasteful travel time on-course. –Michael Vogt, CGCS, manager of the McMahon Group's Golf Division

Read the operator’s manuals and watch the training videos – all of them. –Bill Hughes, equipment manager, The Loon Golf Club, Gaylord, Mich.

Be an extension of your superintendent. If the superintendent is gone, execute the cultural practices in the same manner as he or she would do it. –Troy Flanagan, superintendent, Anthem Country Club, Henderson, Nev.

Have excellent communication skills. –Stephen Tucker, equipment manager, Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club, Bradenton, Fla.

Continually monitor the course, equipment, and staff with the idea of improving upon the entire operation. –Joe Livingston, CGCS, River Crest Country Club, Fort Worth, Texas

Consider clever ideas to reduce costs in labor and eliminate overtime, like two shifts, part-time workers on afternoons and weekends and section workers to eliminate wasteful travel time on-course.

Know that all of your equipment are different and specialty equipment like top dressers, aerators and sprayers.

Be a conduit to the superintendent. If the superintendent can't be spent.

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MISSION: MOVE UP THE LADDER

Is your handicap on your resume? Maybe it should be. That and other career advice from the Atlanta Athletic Club's Ken Mangum, CGCS.

BY MARISA PALMIERI

As the director of golf courses and grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club overseeing two championship golf courses and a par-3 course, Ken Mangum, CGCS, knows a thing or two about “taking the next step.”

A graduate of Lake City Community College's two-year golf course operations program, he's been at AAC for 21 years and in the industry for 31 years, making a name for himself managing the redesigns of both of AAC's championship courses and hosting tournaments, such as the 2011 PGA Championship.

Considering his credentials, Magnum frequently doles out advice to aspiring superintendents (see "GSA Journal," page 34). Golf Course Industry senior editor Marisa Palmieri spoke with Mangum to cull some of his best career advice for assistants.

What's the No. 1 career mistake assistants typically make?
I think people get impatient. Especially with the economy the way it is, people are going to have to be more patient and take the right job. Some jobs are a dead end. Chances are your first job isn't going to be one you're going to stay in for 10 or 15 years, so you need to make a good evaluation of the golf course you're going to. Look for a place you can make some improvements, make a name for yourself and stay for about five years.

Some assistants may make a lateral move to another course, and sometimes that may make more sense than moving on to their own course.

The career path is a little slower than it has been and it'll take patience and good investigation and serious consideration before you take a job.

When you hire, how much time do you spend looking at resumes?
We have a scoring system we use to help go through the resumes. We have to - we can get anywhere from 20 to 60 resumes - so we try to evaluate what's on paper based on the criteria we have here. For example if an applicant has zoysiagrass experience, he gets a point for that, there's a point for working with a certain type of irrigation system and so on.

We pick the people who have the most experience for the criteria we need here. Occasionally, I may have a superintendent from out of the area call me up and tell me about an applicant if he's a really good guy, so that would make a difference.

References are very important. Where they've worked before and done internships is very important and where they went to school is very important.

How many people will you typically interview?
Usually we'll do the top five. I remember one person from this last time we made a hire who didn't get an interview. He called me up and said, "I can't believe I didn't get an interview. I have experience here, a four-year degree - I would have thought I'd at least get an interview." I said you do have a good resume, experience and education, but there are five
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guys with all the same things plus their experience is here in this city, not out of town, so we’re interviewing them. Sometimes people don’t realize the level of competition out there.

What are some other things you specifically look for on a resume?
I look to see if the person’s involved in local and national associations. Where have they worked? Who have they worked for? What’s the size of their operation? If someone applied here from a course that plays 5,000 rounds a year, well that’s not good experience for us. I need someone who’s used to 30,000 rounds.

I look for a handicap – do they play golf? It might not be something that most people put on their resumes, but it’s one of those bonus points. If you’re going to maintain the course it’s important that you play the game. It doesn’t mean that you have to be a single-digit handicapper, but you should know the game. As time goes on, you’re just more comfortable in the golf course environment if you can play.

What do you know now that you wish you knew early in your career?
There’s a certain wisdom that comes with age. I remember not getting a job and it bothered me. I had to step back and realize they were looking for somebody older. I was young, I had all the turf knowledge I needed – or at least I thought I did – but I didn’t have a good knowledge of managing people. It was a maturity thing. You don’t get the respect when you’re younger. That’s just a part of it. I wish I would have realized at the time that I just had to age and mature some. That would have probably helped me.

What’s the best piece of career advice you’ve ever received and who did you receive it from?
I worked in the summer of 1974 for Palmer Maples Jr. at the old Standard Club (in Atlanta). He rather sternly pointed his finger at me and told me I should be more observant. I came in early one morning and saw some water in a ditch. I saw it, but didn’t think much about it and when I got back to shop everyone was scurrying around to fix a big irrigation leak. His point was that water in the ditch should have gotten my attention because it wasn’t normal. You need to see things before they become obvious to others. Our eyes are one of the best tools we have to manage with.

What advice do you have for someone who feels like he’s doing all the right things but still hasn’t been able to land a superintendent job?
Be patient, but try to network as much as possible so people know who you are. Sometimes it’s not who you know, but who knows you. Sometimes that’s difficult from an assistant’s standpoint, but it’s important to make sure that people who have input into who gets jobs know who you are. That includes USGA people, consultants, leaders in your state association and superintendents in your area.

It’s difficult to get that first job. There are a lot of good people out there. And when you do have the opportunity to interview, do as much homework as you can. Spend a day or two at the golf course before your interview becoming familiar with the course so you can talk with some background knowledge on whatever issue they have. Typically, when there’s an opening at a facility, they’re looking for something specific – maybe they’re not happy with the grass they have, the tree situation, the green conditions. Try to find out what that issue is and be ready to address it.

What’s most common question assistants ask you and how do you respond?
It’s the more career-oriented things. How do I take that next step?

But turf questions are a good way to get in the door with networking. That’s what I did. I tried to bug all the old guys so they’d know who I was. Now I’m the old guy (laughs).

Does that really work?
It does. I actually got one job because the club went to the association, to the biggest turf supplier in the area and to two well known superintendents to ask for recommendations. I was the only common name that all four people gave them. So, yes, it works.

Networking at Its Finest

I was fortunate to be invited to the 2009 Green Start Academy (GSA). Being an assistant golf course superintendent and a contributor to this magazine gives me an opportunity to share my experience from an attendees’ perspective.

The trip was an enriching experience with education coming from an esteemed group consisting of Bruce Williams, CCOS, Valley Crest Golf Course Maintenance; Ken Mangum, CCGS, Atlanta Athletic Club; Dave Fearis, CGCS, GCSAA; Stan Zontek of the USGA; and Thom Nikolai, Ph.D., Michigan State University. Dustin Peterson, assistant at the TPC at Deere Run in Silvis, Ill., called the experience “amazing.” “The quality of speakers surpassed my greatest expectations,” he said, adding that he encourages all assistants to apply next year.

The event’s format included dinner and an “ice breaker” at Raleigh Country Club, time spent in the classroom, test areas and laboratories at Bayer’s facility in Clayton, N.C., and a tour of the John Deere plant in Fuquay Varina, N.C.

Scientists from Bayer offered insights about current chemistries and some of the latest tools they’re working on. The folks from John Deere showed us two of their walk-behind mowers and we discussed some of the possibilities about future technological advances. It’s great to know that companies support us and have the forethought to be looking ahead in gauging the needs of our business in 10 years or more.

One of the greatest aspects of my GSA experience was the opportunity to meet people who are just as passionate about their careers as I am mine. To those who question the strength and integrity of the future of the golf green industry, there’s a strong group of people who will be ready to step up and lead when that time comes.

Williams said, “All assistants should have a group of people or network to call in good times and not so good times.” Green Start Academy was a great place to network with fellow peers along with the industry professionals. Attendee Matt Duklewicz, assistant at Ingersoll Golf Course in Rockford, Ill., said that being invited to GSA is the high point in his career thus far. And I couldn’t agree more.

Ekstrom, a GCI Assistant’s View columnist, was one of 50 attendees at Green Start Academy, an annual event for elite assistants hosted by John Deere and Bayer Environmental Science last month. For more on Ekstrom’s experience, visit the November Online Extras section at golfcourseindustry.com.
Always keep your plate in your left hand so your right hand is free to shake hands. Be on time. Don’t have more than three to four appetizers on your plate at any given time. Never order an alcoholic beverage during an interview or the first meeting.

These social rules may be nuances, but when added together, they can change the way both employers and colleagues view an assistant’s or superintendent’s potential. As the golf industry expands, so do turfgrass managers’ personal responsibilities and duties. To better prepare students for these new dynamic situations, Penn State University’s Turfgrass Management program requires first-year students to take a class on etiquette called Life Skills for Turfgrass Management.

“While Penn State’s program concentrates on turfgrass management, we recognize that in the real world managing turf accounts for only 15 to 20 percent of their job responsibilities,” says John Kaminski, assistant professor of turfgrass science at Penn State University. “The majority of their career will be spent managing and interacting with a diverse group of people. This is why business management, communications skills, human resource management and etiquette play such a prominent role in our program.”

Diana Zeisky has been teaching the 16-week course for several semesters. While she calls the course a work in progress, it teaches students more than simple etiquette. Students learn how to conduct themselves with people from all different cultures and backgrounds in various social and business situations.

Zeisky worked as an event planner in New Jersey before she moved and opened a bridal shop in central Pennsylvania. When she was younger, Zeisky attended finishing school where she received etiquette training. She began teaching the classes first to customers of her bridal business, then later expanded to teach within the community and finally at the university level.

The challenge in teaching this class, Zeisky says, is helping the students understand they are more than golf course maintenance workers.
She believes that students need to be able to switch easily from how they interact with their grounds crew to how they should interact with members and employers. She teaches students not only etiquette basics, but also how to present themselves and handle social opportunities such as how to give a great handshake that conveys confidence. For example, a good handshake should have an interlocking “web-to-web grip” (the area between your thumb and index finger), Zeisky says. The handshake should be firm; even if the other person presents a weak grip, do not modify your own.

While Zeisky does not have a background in turfgrass management, she has worked with employers and companies looking to hire for those positions. She knows what they’re looking for in future employees. She says there are still certain fundamentals that people expect to see in leaders, such as social ease and good personal appearance.

SOCIAL GRACES

“This is information that I would teach to anybody and is extremely relevant to the students,” Zeisky says. She is always surprised when students cannot present themselves positively to prospective employers. These students will eventually represent the organization they work for and they need to be able to give clients and employers a good impression, Zeisky says.

One of the essential points to providing that impression is the way in which a person conducts himself in a social situation. Leaders, especially superintendents, need to be able to interact with many people from different backgrounds, which is why Zeisky stresses cultural awareness in her class. For example, grounds crews often include Hispanic employees, so she recommends learning a few words in Spanish to find a comfortable level to communicate. It’s important to interact with employees without accidentally offending them.

Students also learn how to interact properly with current and future club members, which is another emerging aspect of a superintendent’s responsibilities. In these situations, Zeisky says it’s all about the physical appearance, demeanor and handshake. While assistants and superintendents should maintain a level of respect, it’s a good idea to ask polite questions and give options for feedback on the course and the member’s experience.

Early in their careers turfgrass managers may use the pointers about working successfully with their grounds crew more than interacting with members, but it’s essential they understand both.

The class also focuses on life skills such as dining manners and protocols. Many of Zeisky’s students do not know the subtle dining basics such as correct eating speeds and safe conversational topics, but Zeisky says these aspects are the most important because many meetings take place over meals.

After her class, students feel comfortable and are able to avoid awkwardness. Zeisky believes this skill is so important, the student’s final exam is a formal dinner held at the Nittany Lion Inn, a historic colonial inn on Penn State’s campus. Here they are tested on all of the dining skills they’ve learned throughout
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the semester. They need to know everything from how to handle the cutlery to the correct position of a glass. (See “Navigating your place setting” on page 39 for tips.) During the cocktail hour and dinner Zeisky observes how the students are doing. During dinner students are asked questions based on what they’ve learned and graded accordingly.

Along with the dinner, students must complete an event-planning project. Although the project is only on paper, students are responsible for everything from the guest list to the room set-up. One of Zeisky’s students had an internship with Augusta National and the company asked him to plan an event, so his class experience was invaluable.

“An etiquette class should be required for all college students,” Zeisky says. The goal of the class is to reinforce the ideas that help create a successful personal presentation. That goal can be applied to any major, but it’s an especially important goal to set for turfgrass managers – especially in today’s volatile marketplace where employees who have good

FIVE TIPS FOR FUTURE SUPERINTENDENTS

1. **Know your role and its importance:** Everything from the way you dress to how you carry yourself reflects your attitude. Dress for the next level of employment that you want. Don’t think that just because you’re part of the grounds crew now that you can be sloppy. Don’t downgrade yourself.

2. **Make others comfortable:** Etiquette is about making the people around you feel comfortable. An easy way to do this is to maintain an open posture at all times where arms are uncrossed, hands are not in the pockets and your head is up and level with surrounding guests. This will encourage people to approach and mingle with you.

3. **Network:** Know how to communicate well with others. You should have a 30- to 40-second speech about yourself ready at all times so that people will remember you. Meeting new people can be one of the most rewarding aspects of any job.

4. **Be open to new cultures and experiences:** Interact with all different kinds of people and cultures. Be mindful and respectful of cultural differences. Zeisky recommends reading “Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands” by Terri Morrison andWayne A. Conaway. The book covers how to respect intercultural relations, greetings andbusiness engagements.

5. **Know how to dine:** Know how to keep up with the people around you. Keep pace with your meal without getting too far ahead or behind everyone else. Knowing the right cutlery and manners is important, but more important is knowing how to look professional while dining. Remember dining basics such as not talking with your mouth full and focusing on what your partner is actually saying throughout the conversation.

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communication skills and social graces will have a significant advantage.

"A lot of it is common sense and I just put it into a package," Zeisky says, adding that the nuances of etiquette are more important than people think. The class benefits future assistants and superintendents and many former students have sent Zeisky e-mails over the years thanking her for the valuable lessons.

"Although students have a hard time recognizing the importance of this class during the semester, it’s usually one of the classes that returning alumni say has helped them the most in their career path," Kaminski says.

"In this era of Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites, students need now more than ever to understand proper etiquette and professionalism," he says. "Being able to grow grass is a given and expected of anyone seeking a superintendent’s position. A successful career is going to be more influenced by a student’s ability to communicate and interact with others than their ability to grow grass."

Leonhardt is a freelance writer based in Medina, Ohio.

### NAVIGATING YOUR PLACE SETTING

A handy diagram to prevent you from fumbling with your utensils at conferences and club dinners.

*Source: The Emily Post Institute*
Filtering drainage water

Use of industrial byproducts shows potential in reducing nutrient and pesticide transport in subsurface drainage.

**Table 1. Media Component Properties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Chemical composition</th>
<th>Grain size (mm x mm)</th>
<th>Surface area (m²/g)</th>
<th>Bulk Density (g/cm³)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activated carbon (Coconut Shell)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.38 x 0.60</td>
<td>1100-1200</td>
<td>0.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activated alumina</td>
<td>Al₂O₃</td>
<td>1.41 x 0.61</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>0.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeolite (Clinoptilolite)</td>
<td>(Na,K,Ca) (Al₆Si₁₂O₃₀·2H₂O)</td>
<td>2.38 x 0.84</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agronomic practices alone such as application timing, placement and rate have not appreciably reduced the pollutant transport in tile drains.

Nutrient and pesticide transport through subsurface drainage systems may become a component of surface runoff if the drainage water discharges directly into surface water or onto the surface offsite or downslope. Subsurface drains conveying water directly into a stream or pond will bypass natural and managed filtering processes, including upland and riparian buffer zones. To protect these surface waters and comply with regulatory and permitting laws, treatment of the waters prior to their entry into a surface water body may be required. In-situ physical and structural approaches are being considered to address this concern.

In laboratory bench scale studies, natural minerals and industrial byproducts (e.g. zeolite, fly ash) have exhibited a range of success removing nitrogen, phosphorus and pesticides. For example, industrial byproducts high in aluminum, iron and calcium, such as fly ash, blast furnace slag and water treatment residual are ideal phosphorus-sorbing materials, while clinoptilolite, a naturally-occurring, inexpensive zeolite, has been shown to effectively remove ammonium-nitrogen from aqueous solutions. With respect to pesticides and other organic contaminants, adsorption to activated carbon is the preferred method for their removal from source waters. Inexpensive, activated carbons developed from coal, lignin (paper industry) and coconut byproducts have exhibited high contaminant-removal efficiencies.

Current research is designed to address the potential for utilizing a blend of these types of byproducts in an end-of-tile filter to significantly reduce the transport of nutrients and pesticides from golf course tile drainage outlets. The research will be conducted in two phases. The first phase is a controlled large-scale laboratory experiment designed to evaluate the filter’s effectiveness while operating at flow rates comparable to those measured in the field. The second phase is a before-and-after field assessment of the filters under prevailing management practices on an existing golf course.
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Table 2. Mean (standard deviation) percent reduction in total load resulting from discharge water passing through the filter, summarized by hydrograph peak flow rate and pollutant (n represents number of replicates).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peak Flow (L/s)</th>
<th>NO$_3$-N (nitrate nitrogen)</th>
<th>DRP (dissolved phosphorus)</th>
<th>Chlorothalonil</th>
<th>Metalaxyl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.63 (n=3)</td>
<td>5.2 (0.43) a</td>
<td>53.5 (1.75) a</td>
<td>59.3 (1.89) a</td>
<td>31.0 (1.31) a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.26 (n=3)</td>
<td>4.9 (0.56) a</td>
<td>53.9 (4.71) a</td>
<td>64.4 (7.45) a</td>
<td>30.1 (5.52) a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.89 (n=3)</td>
<td>3.9 (0.11) b</td>
<td>47.3 (10.87) a</td>
<td>50.8 (12.05) a</td>
<td>25.5 (4.05) a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean across all flows (n=9)</td>
<td>4.7 (0.68)</td>
<td>51.6 (7.17)</td>
<td>58.2 (9.91)</td>
<td>28.8 (4.58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mean (standard deviation) values within columns followed by different letters indicates statistically significant differences (p<0.05).

The filter and after flowing through the filter. The filters were created with a blend of activated carbon, activated alumina, and zeolite (Table 1, page 40). The blend was created by using equal parts by weight of each material.

Significant reductions in concentrations and loading across all three hydrographs were measured for dissolved phosphorus (51.6 percent), chlorothalonil (58.2 percent), and metalaxyl (28.8 percent). Nitrate nitrogen was reduced by 4.7 percent. Peak flow rate had a measurable effect on the amount of pollutant removed from solution (Table 2). In general, filter removal efficiency for all four contaminants tended to decrease as peak flow rate increased across all peak flow hydrographs. Removal efficiency also depended on the pollutant type. For example, approximately 50 percent reduction in the total loads of dissolved phosphorus and chlorothalonil was observed as a function of flow rates across all peak flow hydrographs (Table 2). Similarly, metalaxyl removal was nearly 30 percent of its total load. In contrast, filter removal efficiencies for NO$_3$ were significantly less (4 to 5 percent).

The reduction of dissolved phosphorus measured here is comparable to results achieved by incorporating aluminum oxide materials into the soil. However, the extent of dissolved phosphorus removal observed in this study was not as great as that observed in previously cited batch and column type studies. The reduced efficiency was attributed to shorter contact times with the filter media, a direct consequence of greater flow rates.

With respect to nitrate removal, the results were somewhat surprising; we expected a greater removal efficiency than was observed. Admittedly, clinoptilolite has been identified as an ideal agent for sorbing nitrogen as ammonium and not nitrate. However, activated carbon has been shown to be an effective nitrate sorbent. Nitrate removal may be most efficiently and economically achieved through microbial denitrification prior to or after water discharge through an end-of-tile filter. Cellulosic byproduct materials such as wood mulch, sawdust and leaf compost are well-suited, abundant and sources of carbon necessary for microbial denitrification.

Regarding chlorothalonil and metalaxyl, we assume adsorption to activated carbon to be the primary removal mechanism due to their chemical structure and hydrophobic nature. Variation in chemical structure may account for the differential removal efficiencies observed for each of these pollutants. For example, chlorothalonil is significantly less water soluble (0.6 ppm) than metalaxyl (7100 ppm). Thus metalaxyl may be more hydrophobically attracted to the activated carbon in the filter cartridge than chlorothalonil. As with dissolved phosphorus, total removal of metalaxyl and chlorothalonil remained relatively constant.

Figure 1. Box and whiskers plots of various nitrogen and phosphorus species entering (inflow) and exiting (outflow) filter cartridge system at Northland Country Club, Duluth, Minn., (n = 51) during 2009 sampling period. Boxes are bound by 25th and 75th percentiles, line in the box is median. Whiskers represent 10th and 90th percentiles while filled circles represent 5th and 95th percentiles. For each nutrient species, different letters indicate statistically significant differences in median values (P < 0.05).
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over the three studied hydrograph shapes. We attribute this trend to the high surface area of activated carbon. Again, using different types of activated carbons could increase their removal efficiency. As previously described, the removal efficiency for all contaminants was consistently highest at the extremes of the rising and receding limbs of the hydrograph when the flow rates were least (and residence time high).

Thus, not surprisingly, this filter design may be most effective under baselflow conditions rather than storm flow events. These filters can be used under baselflow and storm flow conditions. However, the large volume of storm flow may rapidly expend the filter. Overall, further field-scale, long-term studies of these filters are required to determine the longevity of these filter materials; once adsorption sites are exhausted the filter will require replacement.

FIELD STUDY
The field phase of the research is taking place on two golf courses (Ridgewood Country Club, Waco, Texas, and Northland Country Club, Duluth, Minn.). The experiment in Waco is set up on a practice chipping green. The 8,000 square-foot green is 100 percent sand.

Water drains through a subsurface network of 4-inch perforated tile to an outlet containing a filter network. The filter has

Impact on the Business
Planning for the Rock Golf Club and the resort began in 1998. It was marketed as Canada's first JW Marriott property and as one of the country's newest and exciting resort communities. Local residents, numerous environmental groups, and the Township of Muskoka Lakes raised many environmental concerns about the proposed use of land in a pristine region of Ontario.

The boom of new golf course construction in the Muskoka region during the 1990s, in conjunction with concerned citizens' questions about the new development, resulted in requests for several studies to be conducted to determine the health of the region's lands and lakes prior to this proposed development. In the end, the construction of The Rock was approved and a new standard was developed that would be the new environmental guideline that all new courses planned for construction in Canada would have to follow. Once the site plan agreement was in place and construction was underway, The Rock faced many challenges and continues to be under the watchful eye of adjacent landowners and the Township of Muskoka Lakes.

Water quality management continues to play a major role and is a major expense to the club as very aggressive monitoring of existing tributaries and management of stormwater ponds continues. During the first two years of operation, elevated levels of phosphorous were detected at Tributary B (one of five) that met "trigger" values and required investigation as to the source.

The site plan agreement had a condition to research ways to manage water used to wash clippings from machinery proved to have an adverse effect on water quality. With the source identified, the next step was to research ways to manage water used to wash equipment and find an appropriate and cost-effective way to eliminate this contamination. Some of the systems researched included flocculation systems, a collection sump/solid separator system and the latest bioremediation closed-loop systems. With management company Marriott Golf committed to the environment and owner approval for funding, the choice was made to purchase the Mi-T-M closed-loop bioremediation system that would continually treat and recycle water throughout the season. Implementation of the closed-loop Mi-T-M system would ultimately reduce water consumption from an estimated 700 gallons per day to approximately 1,500 gallons per year.

The system was designed with both a solid separator and grass-clipping separator ahead of the five compartment filtration chambers. The chambers are designed to allow the introduced microbes to react and neutralize any contaminants in the water. This water is then pressurized through a pressure tank where the filtered water is again used to wash equipment.

The operation also needed a chemical storage area for pesticides and a safe mix/load area for the spray technician.

Funding was again approved for this state-of-the-art building to be constructed and further reduce the impact that a spill may have on the environment and water quality. The building serves for both storage and mixing/loading purposes. It was constructed with a 6-inch perimeter sump, an impermeable sump with a capacity of 325 gallons and a 1 percent slope that would direct any spillage to the sump area and not out of the building. Other features implemented in the design of this building are a premixer and stainless-steel sink, which allow for safer product handling. These features further reduced the potential for chemical to splash onto the applicator as the sprayer is being filled directly with water from the irrigation system. Water from the irrigation system was plumbed into the building and regulated down to 50 psi so that many different applications and procedures could happen simultaneously, ultimately speeding up the mixing process. Building a structure with these features has allowed the applicator to get on the golf course much quicker than before and be more precise with the mixing. Chemical applications are completed quicker, thus reducing the visibility of the sprayer to the guests.

The results of both of these efforts have resulted in vastly improved water quality and have proven the club's commitment to preserving the environment.

The Rock is looking forward to continuing to improve its water quality in the future. Much of the work done is cost prohibitive for a lot of properties, but there are several less expensive alternatives that can result in successes similar to ours. Our continued efforts will focus on educating people in the community, neighboring property owners and government groups at all levels to help them understand that The Rock is fully committed to continuing its environmental efforts.

Jason Winter is the golf course superintendent at The Rock Golf Club in Minnet, Ontario.

Source: The Environmental Institute for Golf's online environmental resource, EDGE (www.eifg.org/edge/).
recently been fitted with cartridges containing activated carbon, cement kiln dust and sand. Laboratory tests suggest that these materials should significantly reduce the amount of pollutants routed through the subsurface drainage.

At Northland Country Club preliminary data indicate that upwards of 20 percent to 60 percent of the pollutants measured at the stream outlet on the course are cycled through the tile drainage network. A filter identical to that tested in the large-scale laboratory study was installed in late 2008 on a tile drainage outlet that conveys water from a significant portion of the course.

The drainage water is a combination of subsurface drainage and surface flows that are collected in micro-depressions and routed to the tile.

Data are collected simultaneously using Isco 6712 automated samplers at the inflow and outflow of the filter following every 4,000 gallons of water that pass through the filter. This is a "real world" application of the filter and is representative of both baseflow and storm flow concentrations.

Preliminary findings from 2009 data at the field study in Minnesota indicate that the filter provides significant reductions in ammonium, nitrate, total nitrogen and total phosphorus (Figure 1, page 42).

No results are yet available for the pesticides. The removal of dissolved phosphorus from the tile flow was not as great as expected. This discrepancy in results for dissolved phosphorus is surprising, considering that in the laboratory the filters were able to substantially reduce dissolved phosphorus.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research will investigate different activated carbons and different byproduct mixes, inclusion of a denitrification barrier prior to/after the filter, long-term sorption capability, efficiency dependence on influent concentrations, optimizing contact time and scaling for larger applications. Identification and demonstration of a filter technology will offer superintendents a scientifically based option to better manage drainage waters in problem or environmentally sensitive areas. At this time it appears that drain tile filters have significant promise to reduce pollutant loads.

This information is important for golf course superintendents who need to protect their surface waters and comply with regulatory and/or permitting laws. GCI

Kevin W. King is an agricultural engineer with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Research Service in Columbus, Ohio; Jon McDonald is engineering services manager for Kristar Enterprises, Santa Rosa, Calif.; Jim F. Moore is director of construction education USGA in McGregor, Texas; Sheela Agrawal is a research chemist with the USDA-ARS in Columbus; Eric Fischer is an analytical chemist with the USDA-ARS in Columbus; James C. Balogh is a soil scientist with Spectrumin Research in Duluth, Minn.
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MANY MORE...
Working as a superintendent at a golf facility in “the land of a thousand lakes” is not an easy task, but Scott Thayer, superintendent of Legends Club in Prior Lake, Minn., has found that with a little ingenuity and the right combination of products, the facility’s 21 water features sparkle.

Legends Club is an 18-hole, daily-fee facility with a 30-acre lake anchoring it. With a maintenance budget of $725,000 a year, Thayer makes sure his wetlands, streams, marshes, ponds and lakes are well cared for.

The course has a man-made irrigation lake that’s connected to several of the ponds and lakes through underground piping. Keeping this pond clean is crucial. Some of the biggest problems Thayer faces each season are the filamentous algae and duckweed, as well as other vegetation. To combat these pond pests, Thayer uses a combination of pond products and manual labor. He uses the biodegradable AquaSpherePRO and supplements it with Blast, a beneficial bacterial product that breaks down organic compost.

“It really cleaned up the water, and it’s taken away 95 percent of the algae,” Thayer says of his program. “We used to be spending 50 to 60 hours per season cleaning in past years, but I have not had to clean it yet this year,” Thayer says of the old method, which included stringing rope between metal landscape rakes to pull the algae to the side of the pond and hauling it out by hand. Now he spends about $100 per month on treatment products, and the labor costs are miniscule.

Of course, managing Legends’ water features not only requires cleaning, but also upkeep. Though the 30-acre lake, which is 5- to 6-feet deep in some areas, is controlled by the State Department of Natural Resources, Legends has installed a bubbler to help with water and air quality during the harsh winter months.

His advice to other superintendents is to be patient. Thayer says, “The right mix of products will make pond water cleaner in the long run, he says. “Keeping movement in the lake will also help the products work even better,” Thayer says. “If the product is not doing what you need, then circulating the water or algae will help eradicate it as well.”

Leonhardt is a freelance writer based in Medina, Ohio.
Golf course superintendents in the Northeast or Southeast may not be overly concerned about a water shortage following the recent golf season. Ask Bethpage Black’s Craig Currier or Merion’s Matt Shaffer, who both dealt with excessive rains as they prepared for major events this season.

Water will soon, if it’s not already, become as valuable as oil to our industry. Where do golf course superintendents turn when one of the most precious asset of a golf course becomes so regulated? We make it our job to use the growing number of technologies available to help us water responsibly.

Mike Huck, principal of Irrigation & Turfgrass Services of Dana Point, Calif., explains, “It all centers on a properly functioning irrigation system first, and controlling the amount of water used second.”

While this is a great starting point, economic pressures don’t allow all golf courses to invest in state-of-the-art irrigation systems. Mike suggests superintendents conduct a uniformity audit and data interpretation. This test evaluates the general performance of the irrigation system and pinpoints shortcomings. Once the system functions well, the next step is to reduce and monitor water use.

Tom Brodeur of the TPC of Boston implemented a moisture-monitoring sequence of measuring points within each putting surface to determine water volumes and irrigation needs. The system evaluates putting surface performance and consistency.

A 30-inch probe – a Field Scout soil-moisture meter – is inserted 3 inches into the soil to gather moisture data. Each green profile is reviewed and nine measuring points across the surface are determined for water content measuring. Next, the points are numbered and entered into a data file.

During advance and tournament week Brodeur’s team checks the points throughout each day to establish a benchmark point of volumetric water content.

The goal is to avoid over-watering and inconsistencies on the playing surfaces. Once a baseline is formed and a number reached, water management begins. Checking the points daily, a water team can apply water only where needed to meet the prescribed moisture level. Water may be added only to several positions on the green or to none at all if water volume meets the determined number.

Staff can be easily trained to determine points and take measurements. This increases uniform water management and avoids oversaturation.

Brodeur uses this method as part of his regular maintenance practices to save money, water and labor expenses, and to assist in cultural practices, disease monitoring and to provide improved playing conditions.

Russ Myers, CGCS, of Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Okla., hosted the U.S. Amateur Championship during hot, dry August.

Watering effectively to avoid subsurface saturation was vital to delivering top-level playing conditions. Russ’ solution was to use a similar monitoring system but with individual handheld units, HydroSense and Spectrum Technologies, which are distributed by Precision Turf.

He gave watering personnel the units and provided them with the “number” for soil water volume, establishing a breakpoint as to whether to water or not.

His goal was to identify potential wilting, avoid watering during the hottest part of the day and leave no question as to what’s wet and dry within the soil. Russ believes everyone has a different take on what’s moist or dry when they’re feeling the soil. The hand-held units take the guesswork away from his irrigation staff.

The measurement within the soil is at 4 inches deep – the length of the probe. Each morning his preevent watering team checked the greens’ stress points for the number. If the reading was below the established point they watered only enough to bring moisture content up to previously established points. This method eliminated the wilting potential during the day and allowed playing conditions and agronomics to remain uniform.

Myers says he has eliminated wet turf, reduced disease concerns and provided firm and consistent playing conditions while keeping irrigation use to a minimum.

Matt Shaffer at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa., has never been afraid of not watering. He’s the industry’s leader in not irrigating turf. Matt has installed UgMO wireless sensors within the soil profiles of Merion’s greens. These devices send internal information to a central computer for regular monitoring. Shaffer says his water usage is down, the sensors provide an accurate soil water content and they eliminate guesswork when watering daily.

Proper water management provided firm playing conditions for the Walker Cup matches, despite the rains. By understanding proper soil water volumes, Matt was able to restore playing consistency quickly and provided the needed challenge for play.

As water quality diminishes and reclaimed water use increases, establishing effective management of salinity, sodium and bicarbonates becomes vital for turf health.

Shaffer is now evaluating use of these devices for fairways and teeing grounds.
At the Bald Peak Colony Club in Melvin Village, N.H., Ian Ladd, mechanic, and Todd Pollini, superintendent, built wooden side and back boards for a Toro Workman using scrap wood. The back board measures 55 inches by 13 inches by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch and was painted with two coats of leftover green paint. The side boards measure 63 inches by 10 inches by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch and they were left natural with no paint, stain or waterproofing. The wooden stakes are two-by-fours that were cut in half lengthwise. Each measures 2-feet long; they're attached to the side boards and back board with sheetrock screws and there's a horizontal 2-inch by 2-inch board attached between both stakes, also with sheetrock screws, for added support. With the added bed height, lightweight materials such as grass clippings, leaves and mulch can be transported in greater volumes. The total labor time was about one hour. There were no material costs because they used scrap wood and on-hand supplies.

**SIDE AND BACK BOARDS**

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**EXHAUSTING ALL OPTIONS**

Jim Swartzel, equipment manager, Justin Bowman, assistant mechanic, and Craig De Jong, superintendent, at The Hasentree Club in Wake Forest, N.C., modified their Toro Multi Pro 5700 Sprayer so the engine exhaust would not burn the grass when it sits in one location for 10 to 15 minutes while spraying. (They first tried putting a board on the grass with limited results). The exhaust was extended and moved upward using a 1 7/8-inch diameter flexible exhaust pipe approximately 18 inches long. The pipe was attached to the existing exhaust pipe with a muffler clamp and the end was raised to another muffler clamp that was welded to the bottom of the sprayer operator's foot step. The ends of the flexible pipe were filed down to remove any sharp edges. The project took about one hour; materials cost about $10. GCi
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Parting Shots

Friends at GCSAA hadn't done anything interesting or controversial in a while. It seemed like they were hunkered down, avoiding any big nasty issues like PDI or riding out the recession and trying to relocate the headquarters or giving the Old Tom Morris award to a dead guy for purely political reasons.

Then, like manna from heaven, my e-mail inbox dinged. It was a note from a well-connected GCSAA member who was forwarding a message from the Club Managers Association of America. It was a very interesting narrative about why CMAA was planning to drop out of the Golf Industry Show after 2011.

Voila! My what-to-write-about problem was solved.

By now, I suspect you've heard that GCSAA is bailing out of dirty, nasty old New Orleans for the wholesome environs of Las Vegas in 2012. Hurrah! The moral compass has been straightened!

Let's look at this from a few perspectives. First, to quote "The Godfather," let's consider the "It's not personal, it's just business" point of view.

There's no question that some people simply don't take to New Orleans' down-and-dirty atmosphere and the whole Bourbon Street drink-till-you-puke-then-drink-more mentality. There were certainly a number of folks who had plentiful budgets but stayed away from The Big Easy because of the perception that they were fiddling while Rome was burning back at their clubs. And, unfortunately, the specter of Hurricane Katrina and a ruined and violent city still looms large in the minds of some.

So, I suspect that there were a few very vocal critics within the membership (and perhaps on the board) who simply can't stand New Orleans. The city is like Cajun food...an acquired taste. It holds little attraction for those who don't enjoy the spectacle, the weirdness and the Bacchanalian atmosphere.

So, I think that from a strictly business standpoint, the GCSAA was worried that New Orleans would no longer be the draw that it had been in the past. Attendance of 12,000 to 14,000 (1 - and others - dispute the 17,000 number GCSAA released after the 2009 event) simply isn't acceptable when the event drives half the revenue of the association and its partners every year. A few thousand more attendees are worth a big pile of cash to everyone involved.

One final business thought: Las Vegas is hurting right now. There's no question that the city is headhunting any major convention it can get. I think Vegas - once again in Godfather parlance - made the GIS an offer it couldn't refuse.

Second, consider the exhibitors' perspective. According to the GCSAA news release about the change in locations, the GIS contacted exhibitors in advance of the decision. There's no indication of what the exhibitors - who pay all the bills - thought about this in the text of the release, but I can tell you what I've heard from my friends in industry. The short, less-profanity-laced version is, "Oh my, I mildly dislike shows in Las Vegas." Why? Two reasons.

First, the Las Vegas Convention Center is a strict union shop. As an exhibitor, you can't fart without permission from a Teamsters steward. Want to plug in an electrical cord? That'll require two union members and cost $150. Want to have coffee and donuts in your booth? We'll send six people over - one to push the cart, one to count the donuts, one to check the temperature of the coffee and three to back them up.

So, despite the allure and glamour of Vegas, it's one of the most expensive places to do business in the country. But, perhaps worse, it also represents the ultimate bait-and-switch from a conference point of view. The city does everything it can to attract shows like the GIS. Then, once attendees arrive, it does everything possible to keep them from actually going to the seminars and trade show. Quite simply, people who are in classes or looking at products on the show floor are not losing money at the tables. Once they get you there, they want you in the casinos. Period.

Years ago, those same issues - cost and distraction - led GCSAA to drop Sin City from the show rotation. Have those challenges gone away? Doubt it. But, I'd be shocked if Vegas didn't offer a tremendous deal to get the show back. And, money talks. In this case, it talked loudly enough that it seems - and the CMAA's announcement alleges - that GCSAA acted "unilaterally" to change the venue. And the club guys were chapped about it.

When you treat a great association like CMAA like a second-class citizen, you shouldn't be surprised that they'd react like this. What's more, it was pretty clear that CMAA's members and exhibitors felt like they were lost in a sea of superintendents at the combined show. The culture of the organization and its premiere event was rapidly being degraded by being literally and figuratively stuck down at the end of the hall.

When it was formed, the justification for the new, combined GIS was that it was a reflection of the concept of "team management" within the club/facility structure. That notion assumes the fact that the GIS partners would also act like a team. Correct me if I'm wrong, but teams work together. When one member of the team decides that its interests are more important than the other members', no one wins. 6CI
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