



In Bounds

By JACK MACKENZIE, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club

During a job interview I enjoyed just shy of a decade ago, I had the opportunity to meet several interested committee members representing the club's interests and one professional headhunter. Truthfully, I can say that the whole process was an enjoyable one for me, and in all honesty the right man did get the position and it wasn't yours truly! However, in the course of the final interview session I was struck by an interesting question posed by the professional interviewer: "Who is your hero figure? Someone like Abe Lincoln or perhaps your father?"

Being the kind of guy I am, after a bit of thought I responded, "Luke Skywalker of course. Hero figure? You bet! Good versus evil and all that." I don't know if I impressed the man or not, but I did get a chuckle from his interviewing partner. Since that time I have often wondered about the importance of a "hero figure" or should I say mentor.

According to Webster, a mentor is a trusted counselor or guide, a coach or tutor. Well, although I did and still do admire Luke, upon reflection my true mentor is a professional in our industry whom inspired me to be the very best superintendent I could possibly be. His name is John Steiner, and I am proud to consider him my professional mentor, my professional hero figure.

John Steiner, CGCS and turf manager at White Bear Yacht Club for over 25 years, has been a part of my life since I entered the industry in 1976. I do not know what he saw in me, but it was with his encouragement that I attended a fertilizer seminar in 1978 and was hooked into the agronomic aspects of turf. His enthusiasm for the industry was indeed contagious and soon I was off to the University of Minnesota to earn my B.S. in Horticulture. And although I learned much at school, my true education came in the field under his tutelage.

Counselor, guide, coach or tutor, John was and still is the total package. He educated me in the art of hand picking rocks off the soon-to-be-seeded driving range and taught me the ropes with a rotary mower around all of the trees and bunkers, a chore that lasted this once young lad two days in a row on a regular basis.

John trusted me to night water and didn't "blow up" when I occasionally ran over impact heads with the Cushman

snapping them off at their bases and only smiled when I told him of a visit from my girlfriend at the time. He gave me much experience riding all sorts of equipment including mowers, construction tractors, a 1,300 gallon sewage truck and of course all varieties of spray rigs. By the way John, I really am sorry for all the trees I hung myself upon with the gang reels, ramming that little blue truck with the sewage hauler and the dead spruces along the 9th fairway I accidentally applied 2,4-D upon.

Often John would share his microscope with me, at a time when that tool of the trade was rarely found upon a Superintendent's desk. To this day he is a self-taught master mycologist trained in the identification of all varieties of diseases, mushrooms and other fungi. He

taught me names and varieties of all sorts of plant pathogens and 'shrooms including poisonous and mind altering ones found locally. Yes, the Amanita muscaria may be a mild hallucinogenic in Russia, but it only buzzed this Minnesota boy for a short five minutes and then made me sicker than a dog.

Salesmen were no strangers to me as John made it a point to introduce me to each and every one of them that walked through his office door. Ed Zylka, Mike Redmond, Dave Krup, Gordy Miller and Jack Kolb may not have remembered who I was at the time, but



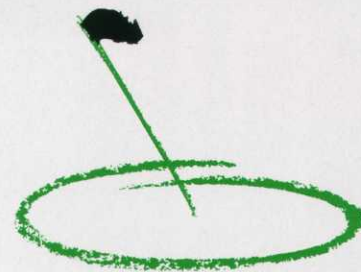
JOHN STEINER, CGCS
White Bear Yacht Club

I sure knew who they were, thanks to John. These relationships, and many more, established through the thoughtfulness of my mentor are still with me today. Just knowing that he considered enough of me to present me to others gave me the confidence I needed during my time of initiation into the industry.

Yes, my first seven years of golf course work afforded me a wide variety of experiences, but mainly because

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John cared enough to share them with me. Besides all of the fun and games many associate with John, he is a true professional and allowed me to grow into a turf manager. In 1983 a spur-of-the-moment assistant job opportunity afforded me the chance to leave John and the W.B.Y.C. to pursue a job in Austin, Minnesota. Shortly thereafter I returned to the cities in a Superintendent capacity and rekindled my relationship with John, this time as a peer.

Actually however, I doubt if I will ever equal John in his agronomic capabilities nor his mycological aptitude. And I can only hope to kindle the spirit of turf management into one of my interns as he has done for so very many talented golf course superintendents through the years.

John Steiner is my "hero figure." I know that sounds funny. But his compassion, enthusiasm, professionalism, turf growing talent and abilities to consistently choreograph the maintenance of one of the finest golf courses in the Upper Midwest places him upon my pedestal. Not to mention that he is a darn good friend and supporter when my dobber is down.

My hat is off to you my friend, a "true blue" pal of the industry. There as a resource only waiting to be tapped. For you are a master of your trade and greatly respected not only by me, but by many, many in our field.

Thank you John for your inspiration. I can only hope that I too emulate your professionalism and will someday also be someone's Super Hero.



USGA AGRONOMIST ROBERT VAVREK, JR. was the main speaker at the 1st Annual Turfgrass Forum at Midland Hills Country Club on May 6. Special thanks to Tom Ryan and the MGA for organizing this well-attended event. Thanks also go out to host Superintendent Scott Austin, CGCS, Midland Hills Country Club.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE

1995 John Deere 3235 5-plex reel mower, 4WD, no hour meter -- \$4,995
1995 Jacobsen HR5111 wide area rotary, 4WD, no hour meter -- \$9,995
1996 Toro 455D wide area rotary, 4WD, 4,000 hours -- \$9,995
Top Canopy for Toro Reelmaster (brand new) -- \$150
Agrimetel BW300
3pt. Leaf Blower -- \$1,500
55 gal. Barrel Roots 1-2-3 (3/4 full) -- \$400
Clamp-on forklift attachments for loader bucket (never used) -- \$900
Contact: Guy Leach
Spring Valley GC
715-778-5513

FOR SALE

1977 Greensmaster 3. No front rollers or reels but is in working order -- make an offer.
MeterMatic F8 walking type topdresser in good working order with many new parts -- \$350
Kubota mid point PTO 72" mower deck for an L-series tractor
-- make an offer or trade for different attachment.
Contact: Justin Gustafson
Ely Golf Club
218-343-5375

WANTED

Ground Master 62" - Good Condition.
Walk behind Greensmower.
Contact: Erik Olson
Halla Greens, Chanhassen Executive Golf Course
952-919-2121 or 952-252-2525

FOR SALE

1996 Toro Greens Aerator with some repair parts.
Good condition. \$3,500
1998 Toro Greens Aerator with some repair parts.
Good condition. \$3,500
Contact: Jared Finch
Giants Ridge
218-865-3022

FOR SALE

1995 Terra Briggs Broom Set
5 hp Briggs Engine
in excellent condition
\$1,500 or best offer
Contact: Mike Hansen
River Falls Golf Course
715-425-2838

FOR SALE

5 LTC Irrigation Clocks
- 16 stations per clock.
Contact: Terry Negen
The Crossings Golf Club
320-226-2887

FOR SALE

Two Toro Network LTC satellites
16 Stations
Make Offer
Contact: Joe Otto
Red Wing Golf Club
651-388-9524 Ext.129

WANTED

Used set of Verticut Heads
Contact: Bruce Leivermann
Montgomery Golf Club
507-364-5602

FOR SALE

5 hp Briggs & Stratton pull-behind Sprayer with 100-gallon tank and 200 ft. hose.
New/seldom used: \$2,000
Contact: Julie
Wayzata Country Club
952-473-6955

FOR SALE

1999 Jacobsen GK IV greens mower with 2,142 Hrs.
Excellent condition. -- \$2,500
12 Toro Veritime mechanical clocks.
We also have a number of complete Veritime satellites.
Make an offer we no longer need them.
Contact: Kevin Rue
218-847-8070

FOR SALE

Rain Bird Sprinklers - used 7 seasons.
38- 700B, 7 - 750B, 5 - 900E,
32-700E, 2-750E, 12 - 2" elec. Valves,
9 - 2" brass valves, 21 - 10" valve boxes w/lids,
4" flow meter, 9 garbage baskets,
9 benches
1979 - GM 3 runs good
- Valve bank needs some work
1981 - GM 3 runs good
3 - 8 blade reels ground & ready to cut
Call for pricing
Contact: Lynn Richert
Angushire Golf Course
320-252-9208