



## Choosing My Outlook

By Jack MacKenzie, CGCS  
Editor

What a road trip. Recently, my wife and I returned home from a 2,965 mile trek down to the "Big Easy" and back. Along the way we stopped at Graceland to worship the King, slept in a share cropper's shack nestled in a cotton field, perspired alongside fellow superintendents in the lower ninth ward participating in the *TurfNet* Habitat for Humanity event, listened to authentic southern music, witnessed the incredible ice storm destruction in the Ozarks of Missouri and once home celebrated a slobbery welcome from my two dogs. Twelve days, a fine travel companion, many, many new memories and NO politics or talks of the economy!

**No Obama this or Bush that** or Pelosi yes or McCain no. Blissful silence from bail outs, stimulus packages, excessive bonuses, incentives, tax reductions, job losses, financial injections, credit crashes or mortgage crisis. However, what a rude and terrifying wake up when I once again dipped into the trough of national politics. The schizophrenic media hadn't lost its touch during my respite and soon filled my mind with political gumbo as my stomach churned with acid, painfully absorbing the latest and greatest plans to "save our country."

**The world is indeed upside down** and my digestion system gets tied into knots whenever I ruminate over the latest headlines. Most of you are in the same boat as I am. Retirement funds have been sliced and diced, home and work budgets reduced and we

analyze and evaluate our needs versus wants quite a bit closer than in the past. Whether real or perceived, times are tough and most likely will be getting tougher.

**During a time when layoffs are becoming too common** I am very thankful that I have a wonderful and supportive family, am employed and love what I do. In fact, rather than frustrate myself with thoughts of the complex dynamics of our national economy, I am letting it go and focusing on my own personal economy.

Compared to the surviving individuals who continue to make New Orleans their home, my family and I are in pretty good shape. We have a solid roof over our heads, continue to pay down our mortgage and are located in a safe, wildlife rich, environment which is full of wonderful memories. With the exception of a tornado there is nothing that can happen that would move us from our comfortable abode. We are very lucky.

**Beyond my family, my job is my life.** Rather than spend energy reflecting upon the screwballs that are currently crafting the destiny of our country I have pledged to myself to concentrate on re-emphasizing my importance to my club. During this uncertain time I do not want anyone to question my loyalty or enthusiasm about my Superintendent position. Typically a team player, I will become even more accessible as a tool to maintain our club, the whole club, to the best of my abilities.

Beyond supporting the other departments I will attempt to be more visible to all of the different groups who make up our club community. Two women's associations, three men's leagues, a junior element (accompanied by member parents) and a couple of random but close knit groups will be more aware of my existence. Quick 'drive abouts' on a family evening, a greet and meet occasions before, during or after an event and more clubhouse walk through opportunities will give the ambiance of an every present Superintendent. Of course I will be aware of the potential for too much exposure, but never will I risk an impression of absence.

**Other tools are also available** to support my participation in golf and club-related activities. The range and practice green will grace my Footjoys as I polish my marginal game. E blasts and notices upon the club's website and bulletin boards will receive more attention, timely and relevant news, from my word processor and digital camera as well. And I will make myself more available for staff and club committee meetings. Enhancing my communicant skills and opportunities will further my importance and security in the infrastructure of North Oaks Golf Club.

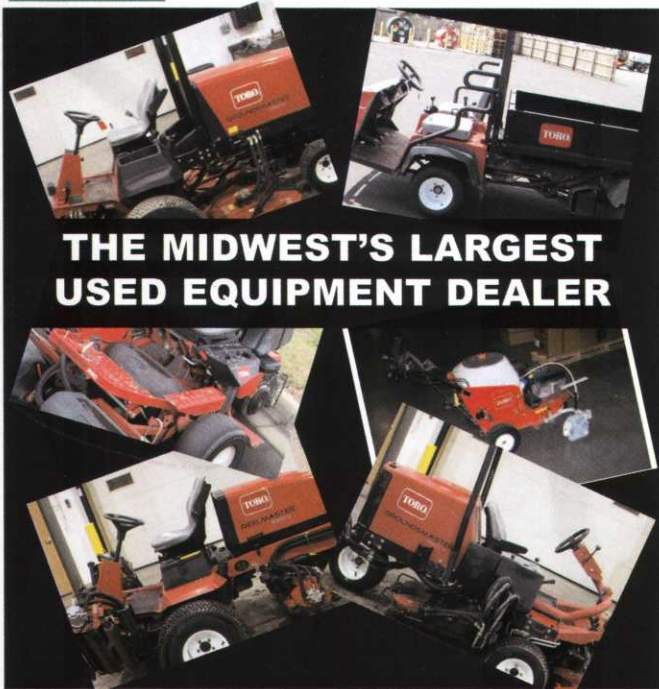
My final tool for personal economic sanity will be to take complete satisfaction of what I do on and off the course. Sunrises are free! As are bon fires, smiles, words of encouragement and laughter with my family. Keeping a positive attitude and striving to be happy through even the most difficult financial times can cure emotional maladies and I hope spread the elixir.

In an environment where everyone is looking for a sanctuary from the economic strife, I will find and retain mine at home and at work. Relevance is key, and through a self-promotion campaign, my ability to apply my trade will be less likely scrutinized as something that can be squeezed or distorted. By living a life of happiness in the face of all challenges others besides me will be lifted. Appreciating what I have especially compared to those who have not will strengthen my resolve.

**One element the economy cannot deny me of is choice.** With a grateful heart today I will choose to let the muddled minutia of politics and our economy go and instead focus on the present, this moment in time where my heart is lifted as I reflect upon my good health, a stable job and the freedom to live happy and productive.



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