



CHANGES

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Editor

A couple of years ago the word "change" blazed headlines and banged eardrums across the country. Touted as the end-all cure for every malady that confronted our economically challenged country, "change" soon gained enough momentum to alter our political playground dramatically. Some "changes" will benefit our population and some, perhaps, not so much. One thing for certain, the constantly changing dynamics of life will assure that there will be changes in the changes we have changed from the original changes.

Our industry is no different. The MGCSA is experiencing its own economic contractions. Membership is down slightly, participation in events has dropped, revenues are stalling and the association budget is being scrutinized more than ever. Participating on the Board of Directors has become challenging during these times of economic duress. Our Directors are expected to make "changes" that will sustain the health of the association. Thus "change" is inevitable even in our tight knit world.

One cost saving modification of the MGCSA standard operation is the transition from a hard copy of the *Hole Notes* magazine to an all electronic publication. As each of us knows, across our

industry this change is taking place. Professional journals such as *GolfDom*, *Golf Course Industry* and *GCM* are realizing a positive economic impact and increased readership through this new format.

I enjoy a good change, positive change that is, and yet I have had a tough time getting my graphite stained fingers around an electronic publication. Tangibility seems to be a key to my appreciation of anything in print form. Carrying a 'hard copy', the tactile feel of paper on skin, does something for me that I cannot attain through keyboard and monitor. However, the inevitable will come to pass with or without me so I enlisted help from a respected friend of mine in the publication and turf industry, Pat Jones, for therapy.

My query to Pat, Publisher and Editorial Director of Group Industry Enterprises, was to provide me with five solid reasons to liberate my trepidation and embrace the change I have no control over. His response, an elixir of verbiage sent in mere microseconds via the internet (thanks to Al Gore!), did indeed cause me to pause and evaluate my seemingly chronic situation.

- You can reach out to far more readers, including assistants, students, salespeople and others who may not have previously received a print copy. Adding more e-mail addresses is essentially free.
- You can run longer articles with more photos, charts and tables instead of having to edit them down or hold them because of space limitations in the print issue.
- All of the articles are searchable on Google and other browsers so it will be easier to find them in our archives.
- Interested in one of the online ads you'll see? You can instantly click through to that company's website to find out more.

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In Bounds-

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- Your column can now be as long (or as short) as you want it. If you are feeling it, you can write 5,000 words. If not, you might get 50!

- You will save money and you will be leaders among the local chapters in embracing this now before you begin to lose money on printing Hole Notes.

Considering the speedy reply it was apparent this guru of the written word had put some thought to the issue sometime in the past! His words of wisdom echoing in my mind I reflected and expanded my horizon.

Indeed in an electronic format editorial comment could be cut, copied, pasted and forwarded to a wide audience with the click of a mouse. Articles, studies and written testimonies could be discriminated to my General Manager, Green Committee or BOD in less time than it takes the first tee time of the day to catch you on the second green. Embedded in those documents could be links to other relevant material to be chased for even more information.

Content could be limitless. Sometimes, often times, a short article just doesn't do justice to the topic of discussion. An electronic format could allow infinite detail, countless photo copy and even links to video webcasts. You potentially could have immediate access to a blog, video association information or even John Steiner getting pranked by his Green Staff.

Got a question about a blend of seed, clip cycle of a mower or MSDS information? Simply tap on the advertisement and zoom to the company website for more detail. Need more in depth University testimony and documentation? Pull it up in the references. Want to know what colors will be most popular in the pro shop this season? Well, there are limitations of course!

Okay, okay, you get it. A "change" to e-format, while potentially reducing the demands upon our tightening budget, would also be good for the readership in many, many ways. It is the future, it is available today and without hesitation I can say that I embrace it. Now I just need to figure how to get my tower and monitor into the bathroom. I suppose it is that portability option that I am going to miss!

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