

## Are We Taking Ourselves Too Seriously?

Michael Gilmore

While attending a seminar at the GCSAA conference in San Francisco, one that dealt with the Human Resources end of our business, I was amazed at the seemingly negative attitude of the majority of people in the room. Negative about dealing with OSHA, employees, employers, and just about everyone and everything, they deal with on a day to day basis. It gave me cause to consider if this was representative of the majority of Golf Course Superintendents or just a fluke. After a good bit of thought, I was somewhat amazed that it doesn't seem to be a fluke.

Ask a Golf Course Superintendent how things are going and a common reply is started with "aghhhh!..." and what follows is a laundry list of problems. And if a person says "Things are going pretty good, the course looks good, my staff is great and my employer treats me pretty well" then he or she is looked upon with a very skeptical eye. I have spoken with Superintendents whose course were almost perfect, and they have sounded as if they were ready to jump off the highest building. I heard one line from a local superintendent, who at one time was a high stress kind of guy, and after I commented about his new, somewhat relaxed, attitude, he said he realized that when grass dies, only grass dies, not people. Some people may be inconvenienced in their golf game, but that's it! A relaxed attitude is not a sign of weakness or lower standards. It is a way of dealing with things, some in your control, and most not in your control. In an environment that is always changing, it is important to be flexible and to be able to deal with change in such a way that you do not compromise your sanity.

Teachers have a salary that caps at \$40,000-\$45,000 (in a good system), police and

firefighters reach that if they are lucky. People who make a daily contribution to the quality of everyone's life are under stress, they can start conversations with "aghhh..." and everyone understands. When someone, making a bit more money than these people, and in many cases a lot more money, and being in our business, starts complaining about things it does not seem to sound so important. We are faced with many obstacles in our jobs, but in the end we need to remember exactly what it is we do - we provide a place of recreation!

Think about how lucky we are to be part of a profession that provides us the opportunity to protect our environment, provide wildlife habitats, and produce spectacular scenery for the people we serve and those around us who marvel at our work. Take credit for all of these and don't be afraid to pat yourself on the back, now and again, and take pride in your accomplishments. When someone pays you a compliment, say thanks and enjoy it. When they criticize, don't take it personally. I have a number of friends who are well paid lawyers, doctors, and other professionals, who see our business and have told me they would trade places with me in a heartbeat. Either they are crazy or they see a neat profession! In a time when defense contractors are scaling back their work forces by thousands, and the business world seems to be downsizing its labor force, we in the golf business are enjoying a booming, thriving growth spurt. We are lucky to do what we do. A number of years ago, I heard Steve Martin, the actor/comedian, say something about his line of work that I feel is one way to view our business and remember, "The most amazing thing to me is...that I get paid for doing this!" Good luck.

## Golf Notes

The 1995 2-man championship had one of the largest fields ever. We had 32 teams competing this year at Springfield Golf & Country Club. Everyone that played owes Ed Gasper a big thank you. He and his staff had the course in excellent shape for us. Ed, thanks and congratulations on a job well done.

Some great golf was played and the winners were:

|       |     |                 |    |
|-------|-----|-----------------|----|
| Gross | 1st | Scott Wagner    | 71 |
|       |     | Jim McHenry     |    |
|       | 2nd | Paul Brandon    | 71 |
|       |     | Bill Appel      |    |
|       | 3rd | Bill Shirk      | 72 |
|       |     | Tim Sage        |    |
|       | 4th | Nick Vance      | 74 |
|       |     | Glenn Smickley  |    |
| Net   | 1st | Mike Evans      | 57 |
|       |     | Dave Osterhouse |    |
|       | 2nd | Jeff Facto      | 59 |
|       |     | Todd Cowing     |    |
|       | 3rd | Ted Savia       | 60 |
|       |     | Dave Fetzer     |    |
|       | 4th | Lee Dieter      | 60 |
|       |     | Dave Fairbanks  |    |

Our thanks to G.L. Cornell and Turf Equipment & Supply for sponsoring part of our gross and net Prizes.

Closest to the Pin winners were:

- #4 Bill Appel  
(Egypt Farms: sponsor)
- #6 Sean Remington  
(Davisson Golf: sponsor)
- #11 Gregg Rosenthal  
(LESCO: sponsor)
- #13 Dave Osterhouse  
(O.M. Scotts: sponsor)

Long Drive winner was:

- #15 Keith Pitchford  
(Turf Equip. & Supply: sponsor)