

association has provided the GCSAA with a list of qualified professionals located in various areas of Northern California, who will be available to serve as exam monitors. This list of chapter monitors will be given to applicants with a recommendation that they choose one from their area.

GCSAA's Certification Program is the next logical step for members who have achieved Class A status and is also a recognition of your efforts in continuing your education. It is also recognition by your peers of your efforts to stay informed about the golf industry, your association and your profession.

The extra time dedicated to attain certification status means you care about maintaining the standards of professionalism within your chosen profession. It is also a recognized accomplishment within the golf industry and a great source of self accomplishment.

Article by Joseph A. Rodriguez, CGCS

## **BEARING BAD NEWS**

*by Jim Janosik*

The wreck of the Exxon Valdez and subsequent oil spill in Alaska earlier this year may seem months and miles away, but now after some of the smoke has cleared from this disaster there are some valuable lessons being gleaned from this nightmare. These lessons go way beyond protection of the Environment and piloting supertankers to what some experts are calling "a textbook case on how not to deal with the press."

Though superintendents rarely deal with the news media, they do deal with a group of people that can be equally as damaging to one's public image, the golfer. The golfer can be anyone from the retired police officer that plays four times a week to the Greens Committee Chairman at a private club that plays once a month. In either case, if not informed properly of problems on the course, the golfer will

always assume that the Superintendent is responsible because of negligence, stupidity, or whatever.

Superintendents are faced with their own little "disasters" such as mainline leaks, diseased turf, hydraulic leaks, vandalism, and whatever, that in the eyes of the golfer are just as tragic as the leakage of 260,000 gallons of crude oil in the Bay of Alaska. There are then several lessons to be learned from this disaster that can help Superintendents deal with disasters in a manner that doesn't hurt but rather help their relations with the golfer.

Exxon Corporation made several public relations blunders in handling the Alaskan crisis that Superintendents would do well to avoid:

1. Acknowledge the golfer's/members legitimate interest in your affairs. They did pay to play the course.
2. Try to understand the viewpoint of the golfer/members point of view. They both view it as "their" golf course. Many take what happens on it personally.
3. Don't run and hide when disaster strikes. Be just as visible in the good times as well as the bad.
4. When you make a mistake, admit it. Avoid excuses and shifting the blame.
5. Be a source before you are a subject. Tell people there are problems on the course before they find out by playing it. This is especially critical for dealing with members at private clubs.
6. Tell the truth or nothing.
7. If you want your side of the story told, you have to talk. Don't let the Assistant Pro or Starter act as your public relations person. You tell the golfers why there is a problem on the course. That 4'x 4' brown spot quickly turns into a dead Green by the time the grapevine gets involved.

By using some of these tips the Superintendent can hopefully head off public relations disasters before they happen.

Article from Divot News-September 1989.