

EDITOR

ROBERT J. COSTA, CGCS
408-373-3701

OFFICE

Barbara Mikel - Exec. Sec'y
550 Main St., Suite G
P.O. Box 3360
Diamond Springs, CA
95619
Phone: (916) 626-0931
Fax: (916) 626-5132

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THRU THE GREEN

Published monthly by the
Golf Course Superintendent's
Association of
Northern California

From The President

The Superintendent/Pro Golf Tournament held on Monday, July 22nd at the San Francisco Golf Club was a huge success. I have heard nothing but praise for the condition of the course and the hospitality extended by the Club. Contrary to popular belief there is a great deal of work and effort that goes into the planning and preparation of a tournament of this nature. Blake Swint was the chief architect and did a marvelous job of coordinating to make it all come together. Barbara Mikel, our Executive Secretary, was also involved in this effort. Most of all we would like to thank our colleague and host Robert Klinesteker, Superintendent, and the members of the San Francisco Golf Club for giving us the opportunity to enjoy their course.

Has the heat got you down yet? I can truthfully say, I'm tired of it. In 1995 from January 1st through July 31st we had twelve days where the temperature went over 90 degrees. In 1996 for the same period of time we have recorded thirty-two days of over 90 degree temperature. My water bill is soaring.

A new feature in our monthly newsletter is an article entitled "Boardroom Briefs". This is a synopsis of what has transpired at our monthly Board meeting. This feature gives the membership an opportunity to see what your Directors are dealing with and also an opportunity to comment or ask questions. Now is a good time to start making plans for the Annual Superintendent's Institute. This year's Education Program will be in the Santa Cruz area with golf at Pasatiempo Golf Course. The dates are November 11th and 12th. See you at the next meeting.

Joseph Rodriguez, CGCS
President

Office Notes

By: Barbara Mikel

The publishing of the 1932 President's Message in the last newsletter brought to mind the fact next year offers the Association an opportunity to celebrate its' Sixty-Fifth Anniversary. I for one am absolutely amazed and delighted to be a part of such an organization. I would like to see the 65th celebration! If you think you would like to see it too, please give a call to one of the Board Members or to me at the office. We will be hosting the California Golf Course Superintendent State Association Meeting in 1997 so it might present the right time for you.



Joseph Rodriguez, CGCS
GCSANC President 1996-1997

Boardroom Briefs

- Regarding Issues involving the State Association, an idea has been proposed to develop a State Directory for use by the State Membership. Concern has been expressed by GCSANC representatives that the membership rosters not be made available to other sources. Also, an annual dues payment was made to the state totalling \$2,105.00.
- Committees were established for the 1997 state meeting which will be hosted by the GCSANC. The committees include Site, Education, and Tournament. Those interested in serving on one of these committees should contact Association President, Joseph Rodriguez.
- Discussion continued on the new membership card. A final decision should be reached at the next board meeting.
- Payment of Directors Insurance premium was approved. Directors Insurance is required as a condition of the Affiliation Agreement with GCSAA.
- Forrest Arthur reported back to the Board on the feasibility of having, for sale, a limited line of GCSANC logoed merchandise. After discussion, a final decision has not been reached.
- Dave Davies, Research Chairperson reported back to the Board on the research projects being conducted at Sunnyvale Municipal Golf Course and the Research Field Station. Dave will summarize the current status of the projects in a future newsletter article.

USGA

Nothing Happens Fast In Agriculture, Except For . . .

Mike Huck, Agronomist

Modern technology allows a number of things to happen at a rapid pace today. This availability of instantaneous response has lead the populace to become what I call an "immediate society". It seems that everything in life is now so urgent that we need it yesterday: "Would you fax that to me right now? Page me as soon as you get that. Leave a message on my answering machine. Call me on my cellular immediately. Leave me an E-mail message. Ship it Next Day Air." All common responses from people in the 90's.

In my opinion, the pace that technology is changing is placing an additional stress on everyone in our society and especially those in agriculturally related businesses like golf course management. Golfers can develop unrealistic expectations as to how fast things should happen regarding growing grass at their courses. Their minds are clouded by how rapidly the rest of the business world moves around them due to modern technol-

ogy. They don't understand that grass does not grow one bit faster in 1996 than it did in 1976. They forget, or refuse to believe, that Mother Nature is in control of the growing environment as much or more than the superintendent. They need to understand that there will never be a computer made that will control temperature, humidity or positioning of the sun. Technological advances aside, this issue is significantly influenced by our society having become increasingly distanced from agriculture in their day to day lives. Gone are the days where three out of five jobs in America were somehow related to agriculture. Today the number is approximately one in ten.

I don't want these statements to discount the improvements made in this business. We certainly have better and more advanced chemicals, mowers and irrigation equipment than twenty, or even ten years ago. This has allowed the conditioning of golf courses to improve greatly. The fact still remains,

however, that all this makes very little difference regarding how fast a damaged green, tee, or fairway recovers. All the computer chips, cellular communications, and faxes in the world cannot make grass resist an attack of a fungus, insects, germinate more rapidly, or develop into a mature turf any faster than Mother Nature will allow. Technology may allow you to order a truckload of sod a bit quicker, but that's about it.

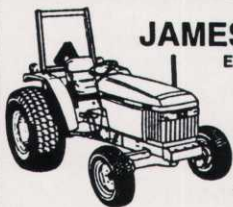
Some superintendents fall into the technology trap themselves, constantly searching for the magic elixir in a bottle. Just add some of this or inject some of that, and everything will be okay. They, too, are searching for that unrealistic, immediate response. In reality, the solution often requires improving the growing environment and most importantly, being patient. Cutting down a few trees to improve air movement and provide additional sunlight

Continued on page 7

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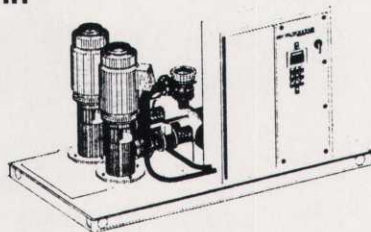
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“Sorry I Haven’t Written Sooner”

My association with the newsletter began shortly after I was elected to the Board of Directors in the spring of 1995. My interest in being involved with Rich Lavine, CGCS, who served as the editor at the time, was to contribute valuable, useful information to the membership on issues and events affecting our Association and Industry. When I accepted the editorship this past spring my desire to pack the newsletter with information became even stronger. After all, it's the only means by which we can communicate directly to each member 12 times per year.

My goal was, and still is to rely on, in part, the general membership and affiliates for newsworthy bits of information. Those of you who have responded I am thankful for your contributions. Those of you who lie in waiting, please don't hesitate to fax me an idea or an article. I have been around long enough to know this desperate plea has been made before. Perhaps I'm naive, but I'm hoping this time maybe it will be different. I hope all of you are aware that there is some financial incentive as well. \$500.00 to be exact. As a previous recipient I can honestly say that was one trip to the bank I didn't mind standing in line for. Whether your motivation may be financial, or you just have something to say, at least give it a thought.



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Is Perfection A Realistic Goal?

One of, if not the greatest causes of stress and burnout in the golf maintenance profession is a superintendent's relentless desire to attain perfection. The often prescribed remedy is to set realistic goals, settle for less than perfect now and then, and develop balance in your life. Imagine my surprise when I stumbled across this short article which suggests perfection is really where it's at.

Customer satisfaction is the bottom line of the quality movement. It might seem, during the stress and bustle of a typical working day, that one little mistake made here or there doesn't really matter to the bottom line. That if on the whole, your customers are pleased with your product, it's okay not to strive for perfection every single time.

We may think that our work doesn't have to be "perfect." How could one little error every now and then make much difference? In an article entitled, "99.9% Right Isn't Good Enough," author Jeff Dewar says that if things were done right 99.9% of the time in the United States it would mean:

- Two unsafe landings at O'Hare International Airport each day.
- 16,000 lost pieces of mail per hour.
- 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions per year.
- 500 incorrect surgical operations performed each week.
- 50 newborn babes dropped at birth each day.
- 22,000 checks deducted from the wrong accounts each hour.
- 5 missed putts, per golfer, per round (just kidding of course).

Quick Quotes

“Most of my ideas belong to other people who didn't bother to develop them.”

Thomas Edison

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Communications — Public Relations

Joseph Rodrigues

As the Superintendent on the Rossmoor Golf Courses, I would estimate that 60 to 80 percent of my time is spent on some form of communication. This would be speaking, listening, writing and reading. There are also the various levels of communication, such as the informal face-to-face exchange, using the telephone, and the more formal types which would include (1) letters, (2) reports and recommendations to the Golf Advisory Committee, (3) budget preparation and justification, and (4) record keeping, such as weather data, pesticide usage reports, absentee records, and material inventories. What and how I communicate to my peers, the golfing community, and the golf course maintenance crew, plays an important role in the public images and opinions of how they view the organization.

Communications and public relations interact in most phases of golf

course operation. I will explain how it is up to me, as the Superintendent, to use the communications skills I have learned to actively promote good communication and good public relations at the same time.

One of the areas in which I have built a good image for the company is in the way I have conducted myself with the crew. It is very important for the crew to have a good self-image of themselves and also of the Superintendent. When the crew is out working on the course and in the public eye, they are also in direct verbal contact with the golfers. If they speak favorably about me, they will also speak favorably about the company. The golfers, in turn, will pick up these feelings. At the same time, unfavorable comments about me will reflect badly on the company. The point of this is that, in the eyes of the crew, I am the company. So, good or bad, that image is portrayed throughout the community.

What has to be done is to build the employees' pride in the company and in what they do. This is where I have to convey to them that the work they are doing is important and also let them know why

they are doing it. For example, "We have to mow the Course twice each week because we are having the major golf tournament. There will be many participants who do not reside in Rossmoor." This gives them a reason why they are doing it and makes them more interested and prideful in how they accomplish it.

I keep the crew members up to date on company policies and directives. In order for me to convey these policies and directives, I have to know the whys and wherefores. I have to know and be able to explain to them because these communications may have a direct effect on how they perform their job. It is also a bad idea to

"Handling golfer and resident complaints on the golf course is almost always a challenging experience. Most of the time this experience can be turned into a positive effort and further your public relations effort."

ridicule a company policy in front of the crew. If I do it, they will also feel it's okay and the good relations that have been carefully built up are eroded.

Effective communication is needed at all levels of the chain of command. I could be talking to my assistant, the golf course crew, club officials, golfers, or the Golf Professional. It is also very important for me to carefully select the terminology I use when addressing them, since the comprehension of turf grass terms most probably varies considerably among these groups. The effectiveness and efficiency with which I communicate with these groups is essential to gaining their support and respect.

Handling golfer and resident complaints on the golf course is almost always a challenging experience. Most of the time this experience can be turned into a positive effort and further your public relations effort. They come up and complain that "the greens are too hard or too dry. . . . There are too many weeds. . . . What are you going to do about it?" This is where communication comes in. I will always give them a friendly, courteous greeting. I have instructed my

assistant and crew to do the same thing. I always listen to their complaints or comments and write them down in my notebook. I carry a notebook with me at all times on my daily rounds of the course. If it is at all possible, I answer their questions. If not, I write them in the notebook and respond at a later date. By writing it down when I talk to them on the course, it gives them a sense of validity. By following through and responding to their complaint at a later date, they know that I am concerned and that I care. I thank them for their concern and I have another convert on my side.

It took me a little while at Rossmoor to learn that many times when residents come to see me with complaints, they were not really there to complain. They mostly just wanted to talk to someone, and they knew I was there.

Rossmoor is a retirement community, and the average age of residents is 75.4 years. Many of them are widows and widowers, and I have seen from experience here that many of them are just lonely. Also, at Rossmoor, a great majority of the residents and golfers I encounter have been in positions of authority. This fact, also, makes for sticky situations, because when you combine the age factor and authority, you have a person who can be difficult to deal with. What I have to do is be patient, be a listener, be considerate, be firm, and know exactly what I am talking about when confronted with this type of situation.

Telephone calls and messages I receive cannot be overlooked. By answering telephone messages promptly, you again give the impression that you care. Your telephone manner when answering and talking on the telephone also gives people insight into how they feel about you and your organization.

Some other things I have done to further public relations on the course and for the company is to play golf with the residents when invited. I also encourage my assistant

Communications — Public Relations (Cont'd)

to play. By playing golf with them, you can get out on the course in a one-to-one relationship. The golfers have expressed the thought that it is a terrific idea for us to play the course and get their perspective of conditions on the course. I agree completely with them.

In the same vein, about three or four times a year, I will invite one or two of the golfers to attend a Golf Course Superintendents' meeting with me. These meetings are held once a month at a different golf course in the area. The program for the day usually consists of a general meeting, an educational seminar, and golf. The resident golfer has the opportunity to meet and talk to superintendents from other courses. He also participates in an educational seminar or some phase of golf course maintenance. The result of one of these outings is another golfer who sees and understands your problems and needs in a different light. As a consequence, he will also work for you in the community and offer you support.

Along with dealing with the golfers on the course in my daily routine, my wife and I are often invited to attend resident functions dinners on occasional weekends. These invitations are normally associated with a major golf tournament held on my course, and even though I am not required to attend these functions, I feel that in the best interest of the course and in my working relationships with them, I should attend. From their viewpoint, I do care about the course and about them, too.

Another communications tool that I use to further public relations is the Rossmoor News. This is a weekly newspaper that is distributed throughout the community. In the paper is a column called *Fore*. It deals with golf news, golf scores, and golf course information. I am able to use this column to my advantage. I will submit articles dealing with golf course maintenance items, such as spiking fairways, fertilizing and any other scheduled maintenance activity that could interfere and interrupt play. Scheduled events and tournaments are also a part of this column. By my using this column and

keeping the golfers and residents well informed, I can minimize rumors that may be false and counterproductive to the operation of the golf course. The *Fore* column in the Rossmoor News also gives me the means to provide recognition for the employees of the golf course. What I have done is write profiles of them for the paper. I put down length of employment, family, hobbies, off-the-job activities, and had them published over a series of weeks. I found that these articles provided a sense of solidarity and pride within the employees. Again, if an employee feels pride within himself, it is also directed at the organization and people who come in contact with that organization.

"Every time you come in contact with someone, you leave some type of impression. If I have communicated a sense of pride in my staff, they in turn will communicate that pride to the public, then you have generated public relations. When I communicate to a golfer or resident with respect and they respond with respect, that is public relations."

I also meet monthly with the Golf Advisory Committee. This advisory committee is composed of Rossmoor residents whose primary concern is the maintenance and upkeep of the golf course. This Committee does not make decisions on what I should be doing or give me direct orders. What it does is gather information from all sources concerning golf course activities and then make recommendations based on this information. As a member of the Rossmoor staff and Superintendent of the courses, I am one of the sources for this information. Each month I write a report for the Committee, and at the meeting I give an oral report regarding what maintenance activities have transpired in the past month. Also mentioned are problems regarding fungus activity on the greens and manpower needs. It is within the realm of the Committee to recommend equipment purchases, major budget requests, and staff requests. What I have to do is communicate my needs in a positive way and solicit the goodwill we have built up in our relations. At the present time, this relationship is functioning because all of my requests have been recommended.

The recommendations were passed because of the open line of communication that exists between myself and the Committee, and because of the mutual respect we hold for each other. We also have a common goal, and that is the maintenance of a quality golf course.

The posting of signs in the clubhouse is another means of keeping the golfers informed. There should always be something posted. I have learned that if people see the same sign every day, they will soon tend to ignore it altogether. What I do is post course conditions daily, such as, the course is wet, frost on greens, course is closed, or spraying in progress. Whatever it is, the golfers are being made aware of the problem

before they encounter it on the course. This is good public relations, and it is also extremely important to keep the golfers informed of hazards as part of my duties.

I have learned from experience that communication is a means of imparting

ideas and making myself understood by others. This exchange can only be successful when mutual understanding results. Understanding is also a personal matter between two people. If the other person hears what was intended for him to hear, then communication has taken place.

There is no question in my mind that communications and public relations go hand-in-hand. Every time you come in contact with someone, you leave some type of impression. Like when I talk to my staff. If I have communicated a sense of pride in my staff, they in turn will communicate that pride to the public, then you have generated public relations. When I have communicated to a golfer or resident with respect and they respond with respect, that is public relations. This interaction of communication and public relations is visible in all aspects of the golf course operation, and it can only be heightened by working on and improving these communication skills. ♦



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GCSAA News:

By Gary K. Carls, CGCS

Report on GCSAA Scholarship Committee Meeting

August 17, 1996

- ◆ There are several Scholarship programs available to students through GCSAA for Both Turfgrass Students and children of GCSAA members.
- ◆ Changes are currently being made to make present scholarships available to a wider segment of students.
- ◆ One possible new program discussed include some type of intern program to assist Turf Researchers.
- ◆ Also under discussion is trying to make scholarships of some type available to current superintendents continuing their education in college curriculums.

Other items of note:

- ◆ GCSAA is hoping to strengthen and broaden member involvement in the Audubon Program for schools.
- ◆ GCSAA is planning a silent auction at the Las Vegas Convention Show to support the Robert Trent Jones Fund.

Look for further details on these items in upcoming editions of Newsline and Golf Course Management



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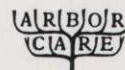
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Superintendent Pro Results

Team Gross

Michael Basile	69	Santa Clara Golf & Tennis Club
Mike Paul	69	
Michael Garvale, CGCS	70	Palo Alto Hill Country Club
Jim O'Neal	70	
James T. "Ty" Abraham	71	Mountain Springs Golf Course
Mike Cook	71	
Michael Clark, CGCS	72	The Oakmont Golf Club
Jeff Pace	72	
Timothy Thilo, CGCS	73	Peachtree Golf & Country Club
Greg Hanway	73	

Team Net

Terry Grasso	64	Burlingame Country Club
Joby Ross	64	
Richard Scholes	65	Corral De Tierra Country Club
Gerry Greenfield	65	
Roger Robarge	66*	California Golf Club
Mark Doss	66*	
Thomas Wallick	66*	Pruneridge Golf Course
Jeff Johnson	66*	
Douglas Holcomb	67	Delta View Golf Course
Joseph Fernandez	67	

Low Gross Pro

Mike Paul	70	Santa Clara Golf & Tennis Club
Gerry Greenfield	73	Corral De Tierra Country Club
Mark Doss	75**	California Golf Club
Tom Ringer	75**	Blackhawk Country Club
Shane Balfour	75**	Diablo Grande, Ranch Course
Jim O'Neal	75**	Palo Alto Hills Country Club

Superintendent Individual Net

Terry Grasso	71	Burlingame Country Club
Randy Gai	72*	Claremont Country Club
John Grant (Retired)	72*	San Mateo Golf Course
Blake Swint	76	Castlewood Country Club
Forrest Arthur	77	Links At Spanish Bay

Individual Gross

Bruce Olsen	77	Emerald Hills Golf Course
David Hayes	80*	Salinas Golf & Country Club
Dave Davies	80*	Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course
Walt Barret	81	Green Hills Country Club
Ross Brownlie	81*	Links At Mariners' Point

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Strictly Business

By Bob Costa

The most common form of harassment in the workplace occurs between a supervisor and a subordinate. But what about the actions of co-workers. As hard as you may strive for teamwork and harmony amongst your staff, some form of employee confrontation is inevitable. As a manager, you may be held responsible not only for your own actions and behavior, but also the interactions of those employees under your supervision.

Harassment, whether motivated by discrimination or some other form of conflict can result in arguments and disputes in the workplace. When it involves co-workers, your responsibility as a manager is to respond quickly and attempt to diffuse the situation. Failure to do so may result in future issues of liability for both you and your golf club.

As I mentioned, the key is to respond quickly as soon as you become aware of a conflict amongst employees. All members of your staff have a right to work in an environment that is safe and non threatening. It's your responsibility to ensure that those conditions exist.

Disputes among employees can often be resolved before any formal disciplinary action needs to occur. Here are some suggestions about how you can mediate disputes before they escalate into major conflicts, or even lawsuits.

- ◆ **Speak to Each Employee Individually** — It's important to get each side of the story.
- ◆ **Meet privately with other employees who may have witnessed a confrontation or dispute** — This can be helpful to help sort out the facts. You may find that other employees may not be willing to provide information simply because they don't want to be involved.
- ◆ **Gather the disputing employees in a private location to talk** Privacy is important because it generates trust. Set rules for meeting. Such as, allowing each individual to speak uninterrupted. Allow each individual to state his, or her version of the conflict. Summarize your understanding of the problem. Make it clear that the behavior which resulted in the dispute is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. A solution must be reached.

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Strictly Business (Cont'd)

- ◆ **State your neutrality** — Be certain that each individual understands your role. You are not concerned with assessing blame but, simply to identify the problem and resolve the conflict.
- ◆ **Carefully manage the discussion** — Make sure only one person speaks at a time. The goal is to gather the facts. Ask each individual to summarize their views and the views of the other party. Try to direct the discussion so there is some agreement among the employees as to what the problem is. This will go a long way toward a compromise and lead to a solution. More often than not the individuals involved will find the problem is simply one of poor communication.
- ◆ **If the parties can't agree on a solution be prepared to impose one** — Try to make it as equitable as possible, so one individual doesn't feel as though he is the only one losing. Usually in these types of disputes fault can be found with each party. Once a resolution is agreed upon, declare the dispute over with and thank the employees for their cooperation. Remind them of the fact that a continuation of this conflict will not be tolerated and suggest that further disputes may result in disciplinary action.
- ◆ **Follow up** — After a few days, check to see that the resolution is working. Monitor the situation every few weeks and be quick to respond if you sense the conflict is heating up again.



Nothing Happens Fast (Cont'd)

or rebuilding a problem green will often offer faster, longer lasting results than any "over the counter" bottled cure. Golfers would rather you throw thousands of dollars away on snake oils and additional chemical "fixes" than address the real agronomic issue, right? Unfortunately, it's true in some cases. As Dr. Joe Vargas once said, "Golfers would rather get rid of a superintendent than a tree."

Sorry, folks! I just don't think the magic potion in a bottle will ever be found. If it is, you can look for me to be selling it, because the payoff should be better than winning the

Rosenstrauch Receives Professional Certification

David Lee Rosenstrauch, superintendent at Orinda Country Club, has been designated a Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Rosenstrauch has been superintendent at the Orinda, California course since 1987. He lives at 5885 San Pablo Dam Rd., El Sobrante.

As a part of the certification process, an on-site inspection of Rosenstrauch's golf course operation was conducted by two Certified Golf Course Superintendents: Randal C. Gai, CGCS, at Claremont Country Club, Oakland, and Wayne S. Lindelof, CGCS, at Lone Tree Golf Course, Antioch.

Did You Know?

The use of sun hats, or safari hats as a form of head protection for golf course maintenance employees does not meet the current Cal-Osha safety code? Please be reminded that if you purchase these types of hats for your employees you may be held responsible for any injuries that might occur.

For information regarding acceptable head protection, contact your insurance carrier or Cal-Osha.

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