

## MAGCS Directors Column

### Hiring an Assistant Superintendent?

by Phil Taylor, Mgr./Supt.  
Sugar Creek Golf Course

Even if you are not looking to fill this important full-time position at your facility this year, we all know of the assistant's rapid turn-over rate in our profession, and the following information and guidelines may become useful to you in the future.

The first step of this employment process is to develop a time table giving each step of the process a date deadline. This will help you to avoid procrastinating or making any hasty decisions. Knowing exactly what you must have done by what time will keep you organized and also it should eliminate those unnecessary phone calls from anxious prospects.

Once the position has been officially announced (the avenues you choose to make the announcement will probably depend on the degree of expertise required in the position profile), and an acceptable number of resumes have been received, invitations can be sent to prospective candidates for interviews. Be sure to give yourself ample time on your time table to allow you to do your homework prior to each interview.

The more research you do, prior to the interview, the more productive each interview will be. Information that can be obtained prior to the interview will not only help you separate out possibles from the not possibles, but it can also give you a good starting point for asking the candidate a question you are sure he has the answer to. This will help him feel more at ease and this should be your first objective. Additional preparation should include a query sheet. You should have questions ready that cover not only the characteristics of the position the candidate is applying for, but also questions that would yield answers reflecting his or her ability to make decisions, to organize and plan, to be sensitive to people. Other areas you may wish to probe through your questioning could include communication skills as well as leadership abilities. Remember, in the formulation of your questions, you are trying to relax the candidate as well as gain as much information as possible. Avoid questions that require only a yes or no answer.

"WHAT" questions are okay for ice breakers, but WHY and HOW questions will bring out the meaty comments. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has formulated some guidelines to follow in preparing your questions. Failure to stay within these guidelines could result in serious repercussions to you and your employer. These guidelines are as follows:

#### What You May Not Ask of the Applicant

1) Age; 2) Date of Birth; 3) Previous Address; 4) How Long at Present Residence; 5) Religion; 6) Name of Priest, Rabbi or Minister; 7) Father's Surname; 8) Mother's Surname; 9) Maiden Name; 10) Ages of Children; 11) How Many Children; 12) Marital Status; 13) Who Will Care for the Children; 14) Spouse's Place of Employment; 15) Spouse's Residence; 16) Parent's Residence; 17) Parent's Place of Employment; 18) Whether They Rent or Own Their Residence; 19) Loans or Financial Obligations; 20) About Wage Attachments; 21) About Personal Bankruptcies; 22) If Ever Arrested; 23) About Legal Convictions, Unless Relevant to the Job; 24) About Foreign Languages Spoken, Unless Required for the Job; 25) Race; 26) Memberships in Social Organizations; 27) Attitude Toward

Geographical Locations, Unless Required by the Job.

#### What the Interview May Ask of the Applicant

1) Reasons for Termination of Previous Employment; 2) About References; 3) Work Schedules; 4) Previous Work Experiences; 5) Job Related Feelings about Previous Assignments or Present Position; 6) Career Interests; 7) Job Duties; 8) Job Training; 9) Education; 10) Job Related Professional Associations; 11) About Qualifications for the Duties Related to the Job; 12) Any Other Information on the Application Related to the Position.

Although it may appear as if these Federally enforced guidelines severely hamper an interviewer, most would agree that they actually make you a better interviewer by keeping you focused on the criteria important to the proper selection of an employee.

Once you have prepared your query sheet and researched the candidate, the actual interviews may begin. Keep in mind, during the course of the interview, it is not just a question and answer period, but you are also looking to see somebody - facial expressions, body language and actions can supply valid information. Also remember, the interview process is two-way. You are seeking information about the candidate, but he also has the right to gather information about the job he is applying for, about the golf course and YOU. It is desirable to keep this two-way communication going throughout the interview, but allow time for the candidate's specific questions at the end. Among the most common mistakes interviewers make are talking too much and taking too many notes. You won't find out much about the candidate if you do all the talking. If you try to write down every word the applicant says, you will have little opportunity to listen or observe.

Upon completing the interview it is a good idea for you to record your impressions immediately while they are still fresh in your mind. Three points worth noting would include: 1) How curious was he? (note the kinds of questions he asked of you. An inquisitive person often spots trouble and initiates projects.)

2) Does he have a clear idea of what he wants to do? (you want to hire someone who is flexible because no job is exactly what a person is looking for. The less sure the applicant is about what he wants to do, the more apt he is to be dissatisfied with the job). 3) How would you sum up his personality? (sum up the applicants personality in three or four words. Use your instinct. For instance, you might write "assertive, hard working, too serious" or "personable, bright, lacking in confidence".) Now, quickly describe yourself in three or four words, then the ideal candidate for the job. How would the applicant's personality fit with yours? How close are your answers to what you are looking for?

Once you have completed the interviewing process with all your prospects, you can compare your notes and make your decisions. (sometimes call back interviews are necessary before making your final decision). According to your time table, you can then notify the successful candidate and offer the position. Be sure to notify those unsuccessful candidates from whom you received resumes that the position has been filled.

These are just a few possible guidelines you may wish to follow in your search for an Assistant Superintendent. If you are inexperienced in conducting interviews, you are likely to be as nervous as the interviewee. It may help to relax you if you simply consider the interview as a "slice of life".