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## President's Message

by **Bruce R. Williams, CGCS**  
President, MAGCS

### Are You Sure That Your Workers Understand Their Orders?

In the charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War, six hundred British troops went into the valley of death against overwhelming Russian forces because of a misunderstanding of orders by their superior officers. If well-trained, highly disciplined officers could misunderstand their orders, there is reason to suppose that almost anybody could misinterpret orders in an everyday golf course operation.

If an employee misunderstands his instructions, is it his fault? Probably not. First, the superintendent may have incorrectly evaluated the employee's ability to comprehend a certain level of instructions. Second, the instructions could have more than one interpretation — or a misleading single interpretation. Instructions or orders have to be given with due consideration of the experience and the level of comprehension of the employee who is on the receiving end.

Of course excessively detailed instructions are time consuming, but a presumption that can be frequently made is that: **If an instruction can be misinterpreted — it will be.** That premise can too often be true, whether the employee is careless or conscientious in complying with his superintendent's orders. Therefore, before issuing an instruction, consider if there are any possibilities for alternative reactions on the part of subordinates.

As we enter the final growing month of the golf season, it seems as though communication problems increase as many employees only have thoughts of returning to school or their home and families in their native Mexico. In order to maintain optimal levels of productivity it is paramount to avoid confusion and offer good instructions.

#### GUIDELINES FOR INSTRUCTIONS TO EMPLOYEES

1. Who is to perform.
2. What is to be done.
3. When it is to be done.
4. What are the exceptions.
5. What is to be done with the exceptions.
6. What are the alternative methods.
7. When are alternative methods to be used.
8. Who has additional know-how.
9. When should advice be sought.
10. Where are written instructions.
11. What tools are available.
12. Which equipment is to be used.
13. Which examples should be followed.
14. What follow-through is required.

(President's Message cont'd.)

15. What checking should be done.
16. How are errors to be handled.
17. When is the task considered to be completed.
18. What is to be done after the task is over.

The next three months are full of some excellent opportunities for enhancing your agronomic and management skills. To strengthen your skills and take advantage of these opportunities there are three important factors. First and foremost we need your attendance. Second we hope that you participate actively. Finally, you need to take all of the information you have gathered and put it to use with an action plan. Aside from our regular monthly offerings we have the MAGCS Clinic in November, the NCTE in Springfield in December, and the GCSAA seminar in January at Pheasant Run. I hope to see each and every member there.

**Bruce R. Williams, CGCS  
MAGCS President**

## Director's Column



**Ed Braunsky, Supt.  
Geneva Golf Club**

### Work!

What is a nine holer doing on the board of directors of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents? Well at first I had a hard time believing that I was elected. As time went on though, I realized why the horror. Someone must have known that I love to work.

Running a nine hole course is a lot of work as is any course. A strong back and a hard work drive is required to be a superintendent.

The great thing about our profession is the work ethic that most superintendent's have. Maybe the shortage of turf students is possibly caused by the lack of interest in hard work that would be required by the youth today. If being a superintendent was like playing a "Nintendo" game or being in a rock video, men and women would flock to enter our field. There are moments when you have your "down" times, but you also need to be there to jump in when needed.

Our profession goes in to the 1990's in great shape. The Chicago area is a "hot bed" of activity. While I have not seen too many video's on how to make your first million dollars as a superintendent, the rewards we receive are endless. The possibilities are there for the young up and coming turf students, but be prepared to do one thing ... WORK!

A note of thanks to those who participated in our survey this past year. The results have helped us tremendously. Any information that is incorrect in the directory needs to be brought to Penny Meyer's or my attention. Thank's a million!

## The Old Men — A Tribute to the Seniors

by **Tony Rzadzki, Asst. Supt.  
Cantigny Golf Club**

In July I had the pleasure of attending 'Seniors Day' at The Woodbine Country Club. Carl Hopphan was the guest speaker that evening after a soggy but enjoyable day of golf. Carl was my old boss at the Evanston Golf Club after Walter Fuchs Sr. retired. I consider myself very fortunate to have worked for these two seniors as well as a few others. After attending this meeting I felt compelled to write this anecdote; something that I have been thinking about writing for the past two or three years.

I remember back in May of 1978 the first 'senior' that really shaped my career, Bill Dobbe. Bill was the head mechanic at a cemetery that I had worked at. 'Old Carp Lips' (that's what the crew called him) was an ornery, cantankerous gent from the outside, but inside was a tender, generous person that was willing to help a spirited eager beaver like myself.

After about a year of pushing a shovel and warming up to Bill, he slowly broke me into his work place and began showing me the ropes. Bill needed me as much as I needed him. His 'senior years' had granted him 5 weeks vacation a year, so someone had to mind the shop in his absence. Shoveling dirt, digging holes, and tending funerals had become quite tiresome to me, so wrenching equipment was a welcome change and an experience that has carried me a long way. Thanks Bill.

In October of 1980 the second 'senior' that appeared in my life was Walt Fuchs Sr. I think all of us throughout our lives encounter someone that really leaves a striking impact upon us. This was Walter. After working one week with Walter I finally had a goal to my life. I knew that the golf business was what I really wanted to do and that the benefits, though they may be long in coming, are well worth every effort used to achieve them.

So my trial began. After a long winter of learning how to 'finger grind' reel mowers and prepping the equipment for the next season, I would hurry up and finish my daily chores then go out in the field and learn something. This golf course work was all new to me; aerification, chemicals, reel mowers, irrigation systems, poa annua, disease, welding, drainage, sand traps, construction ... but I savored every moment. It sure beat the hell out of planting concrete boxes in the ground.

I had a great teacher to foster me through these first few years. He laid a great foundation for me to build on. What a great senior. What a great man. Thanks Wally.

In 1984 Wally retired and Carl Hopphan grabbed the reigns at Evanston. My raw talents were evident to Carl, but some refinement was needed. Carl saw this and he knew that twisting bolts was not in my future. The following year he hired an assistant mechanic. This allowed me more time to gain field experience.

A few of the things that I learned from Carl mostly dealt with 'people management'. From club members to mexicans, salesmen to the golf pro. Carl was a marvel to watch. Someone once told me that public relations takes up about 60% of a superintendent's time. This may or may not be true, but Carl has a grand eloquence, a charisma that the members truly enjoy. Shmoozing and rubbing elbows with the big boys may come as a hard chore to some people, but it is a duty that needs to be done and I was able to experience a master at work.

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