

(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.

(cont'd. page 4)

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(The Old Men cont'd.)

Carl often gets teased about being long-winded at times. I have partaken in a few of his narratives. Deep inside Carl desires to share knowledge, just as he did at the 'Seniors Day' outing. Right after Carl spoke Russ Fink introduced us to the computer network that he is trying to develop between local superintendents. Sharing knowledge is the backbone of the Midwest Association. Carl's process may be a slower one nowadays, but still very effective.

Carl once said that if you attend a meeting and come back with only one new thought, concept, or bit of information, you've learned something and it was money well spent. He was all for the fledgling mechanics association. Look at what a growing organization that has become.

In January of 1986 the greatest senior that ever lived passed away. Carl wrote these words:

"Always remember that your father will be the greatest man in your entire life. This will become a very strong feeling in your heart as you grow older. My thoughts will be with you and your family at this time ... Now it is your time to carry your father's memory in your heart and let that make you an equally great father for your own family. This I am sure would make him very proud." Thanks Carl.

My father used to say, "always remember good old J.C. (Jesus Christ)." He also used to tell me that whatever you strive for in your life always try your hardest to do the best of your abilities. These two thoughts I remember best as the most important things that anyone has ever taught me.

Nothing in my life ever hurt me as bad as that January day. I still think about my father every day.

Years have passed
The sadness lingers.
Evermore I will remember
The deeds this man has done.
I long for those days once more
To walk the fields again
And learn the lessons of youth.
Not so long ago,
Yet still fresh in my memory
Laughter and joy that once abounded
Is now tenfold sorrow.

What I am trying to relate in this article is mostly aimed at the younger crowd. The turf students, budding rookie assistants, the 'rising stars', and anyone striving to get ahead in their field.

I learned this lesson a long time ago. Latch on to that 'old man' (god I hate that word), grab him and hold him. Devour his experiences and make them yours. Bill Dobbe, Carl, Wally and my father are (or were) not over educated individuals. Look at their brilliant careers. These men breathe common sense. It's in their veins. Brush up and work side by side with a senior and something will rub off. Make your life happen with theirs and gorge yourself of their knowledge while you can, because someday they will be gone.

My cousin once asked my uncle, "how come dad, that the older I get the smarter you get?" My cousin at the age of 42 is still learning lessons from his father. These lessons are life. Respect your elders and learn from them. With luck you'll be as fortunate as I have been to work with such great senior statesmen.

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