

Director's Column

by Mike Bavier



Surveys are probably a necessary tool for organizations. Do you wonder sometimes if they put down just the answers they want to hear? The thing that drives me nuts is when they say mark only one. Here is a sample question: Why did you attend the last conference — New Orleans or St. Charles? 1. Education, 2. Equipment show, 3. Visit the city, 4. See old friends, 5. Other. Now give me a break ... Most of us attend for a combination of reasons. Plus, there are those superintendents that go so they can attend the spouse program. Maybe next year that will be a choice on the survey. We should give the Association credit for including the spouse program. The program gives attendees an alternative from sitting through lectures where the mike is malfunctioning.

Some of the questions on the survey are easy to answer. Did you like Terry Bradshaw's opening address? How could anyone complain about someone who talks about football and tells you to call your mother? He was good, and if you missed him, oh well!!!!

Now, when you were asked, "how did you like the banquet?", that is a different question. Most of us would agree that the banquet was fine but if we are unable to get the recipient of the Tom Morris award to attend, why even give the award? Just maybe we need to be big enough to say the award is going to be suspended for a year or two. Many of you have suggested just that to me — but my survey left this question off this year.

HOTELS — How was yours? If you had a \$100.00/day to spend you were probably quite happy. However, a number of our friends spend their own money or are limited to the amount they can spend. So, maybe we need a question about — do we need low cost hotels? This might also make it easier for more assistants to attend. Also these low cost hotels will help those superintendents that are applying for the \$19,000/year job for the nine hole course the Association is advertising for in Indiana.

The last question asked many times is — are you going to attend next year? Do you really think it will make a difference? Sites have been selected years in advance and we are committed to having a meeting at these cities. It is nearly impossible to get out of the contract. The survey might ask, "What city might be a good choice for the conference in the future?"

You want my opinion? Who Cares! They should consider Washington D.C. What better place to be than where government is making all the laws against us. Plus we might just get some of the high ranking officials to our conference, and what a spouse program they could put together.

Do we really get a chance to make any suggestions? The comment sheet is there for your opinions — give the Association at least that credit. Now does anyone really care? Keep filling out those surveys. For What? Who Knows!!!

About Tomorrow Today

The first in a series of environmental awareness articles,
by Scott A. Witte, Asst. Supt. Barrington Hills C.C.

It is a general fact that too many people are not completely environmentally aware. For this reason many of the current environmental problems are not efficiently being solved. We are living in a "Throw Away Society," where plastics, metals, cardboard, paper, landscape wastes, and countless other resources are simply ... thrown away! In addition to this, an extremely low percentage of people actually know where this waste is going. I feel that we need to be aware of the real facts behind the consequences of our "wasteful" way of living.

Awareness starts with seeing that our current landfill situation is on the brink of a crisis. We are producing more trash than ever before and are rapidly running out of places to put it. The average American discards just over 4 pounds of waste per day. Combining everyone in the United States, that equates to 83,000 garbage trucks each day or a total of 140 million tons per year!

Studies show that the refuse generated by a city is composed of roughly:

Paper 41%	Wood 5%
Food Wastes 21%	Rubber/Leather 3%
Glass 12%	Textiles 2%
Ferrous Metals 10%	Aluminum 2%
Plastics 5%	Other Materials .3%

These proportions may vary greatly depending on residential or commercial communities, but for all practical purposes, they provide a sound average. One material not mentioned on the above list is landscape waste such as grass clippings, leaves, and branches etc. During certain seasons, these wastes may often equal all the other categories combined. It is for this reason that yard waste is no longer accepted by regular municipal waste management.

This landfill crisis is not simply an issue of "where will we put it?", but also, "where have we put it?" Municipal waste managers of the past had no understanding or interest in ecology, the water cycle, or what products would be generated by these decomposing wastes. Furthermore, they had no regulations to guide them. Therefore, any cheap, low lying depression, wetland or hole became a landfill. Dumping then commenced with no precautions taken. "A hole is to fill (period)", was the mentality.

The consequences of landfilling in this manner were many. The most serious problem by far is groundwater contamination. Recall that as water passes through any material, various chemicals may be dissolved and carried along which is known as leaching. The water containing the pollutants is then referred to as leachate. This leachate ultimately consists of residues of decomposing organic matter, combined with iron, mercury, lead, zinc, and other metals from rusting cans, discarded batteries and appliances. It is also generously spiced with discarded paints, pesticides, cleaning fluids, and other not-so-friendly chemicals. Further, the siting of landfills and the absence of precautionary measures noted above, funnel this "Motion Potion" directly into the groundwater aquifers.

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(About Tomorrow Today cont'd.)

All states have some municipal landfills that are or will be contaminating groundwater. The expected cost for cleanup at each of these sites will be between 10 and 100 million dollars! So much for cheap waste removal.

A second problem is methane production in old fills. Since most waste is buried, its decomposition is anaerobic and the waste resulting is biogas, which is about two-thirds methane. Methane gas tends to seep horizontally through the earth. This horizontal movement of methane has resulted in the destruction of over 20 homes at distances of over 300 meters from landfills. Methane entered the basements of these homes causing explosions as it accumulated and further ignited. It is also possible for this gas to seep to the surface, which then kills vegetation by poisoning the roots. Without vegetation, erosion occurs and the unsightly waste is exposed. A few cities have resolved these problems by installing "gas wells" in older fills. The wells trap methane that may be used as fuel. In most cases though, this methane is burnt-off at vents, which completely wastes its energy potential!

With the increasing problems of toxic leachates and methane production, landfills must now be built in accordance with these current regulations:

★ New landfills are sited on high ground, well above the water table.

★ The floor is contoured for drain tiles which collect leachates that drain along an impervious clay or plastic liner. On top of this is a layer of coarse gravel which serves as an avenue for the leachate collection system. Collected leachate may then be processed accordingly.

★ The gravel layer that eventually surrounds the entire fill, also serves to vent methane to be used for fuel.

★ In the process of filling, layer upon layer of refuse is built up to a pyramid. The finished landfill thus sheds water and minimizes infiltration, percolation, and formation of leachates.

★ Finally the entire site is surrounded by a series of groundwater monitoring wells that are checked periodically for leachate contamination.

These new regulations sound great, although, while new landfill design seems to address the problems observed, its costs are becoming prohibitive. Any new site selections for landfills are being met with an "Anywhere but here attitude!" Delays and legal costs incurred in overcoming these objections, if they are overcome, are often as expensive as all other costs combined. In cases such as these, the cost of waste disposal may exceed well over 100 dollars per ton!

With new landfills being held back by costs, and or legal objections, the sad fact is that most municipal solid waste is still going into old landfills with inadequate safeguards. Of the 6000 municipal landfills in the U.S. which receive 75%, or over 100 million tons of waste per year, 75% of these are unlined, 95% do not have leachate collection systems, and 75% do not even monitor groundwater.

Currently, 1,200 old fills are scheduled to close in the next five years because of reaching their capacity or environmental problems. New landfills are being constructed at less than half this rate, and the crisis is worsening! Contrary to what early environmentalists thought, we will not run out of garbage because of shortages in resource materials. We will however

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run out of space to dump the garbage which we produce at an undiminishing rate!

Coming back to common sense, you can see that even if sites for new landfills could be obtained, the system is not sustainable. For this reason, we as superintendents, assistant superintendents or possible influential people of the community, must stop to think about tomorrow today. As with anything, the first step to solving a problem is being aware of the problem. Therefore I strongly urge you to stay with me in this series of articles about tomorrow today, as we explore solutions to the landfill crisis and other environmental issues in the subsequent **Bull Sheets**.

Source: "Environmental Science: The Way the World Works"

Third Edition, by Bernard J. Nebel, Dept. of Biology, Catonsville Community College.

Necessity Can Be a "Mutha"

I don't believe there is a Superintendent out here who at some time has not had to innovate, modify, create or invent a tool to achieve a certain goal. The term "Jack of all Trades, Master of None" has never been better suited than to our profession.

Carl Hopphan, Paul Voykin and too many others to mention have led the way in providing tools we could all use on our courses or at home. But when I decided to oversee Bentgrass into a Public Municipal course I forgot to consider the average 24 handicapper that plays it!

Granted he probably doesn't spend as much time in the Fairways as his Country Club counterpart, but at the same time has never seen the Pro on TV replace his divot. For that matter he must feel that Ballmark and Sandtrap maintenance are done by magic!

As rounds have increased from 28,000 to 45,000 our time to service the course is actually decreasing as mowing times keep increasing due to play. Something needed to be done! (We can't do it alone).

After shooting **Introduction to Golf Course Maintenance** 2 summers ago, my goal for last year was to get our membership involved in course care. After all it is really their course, so why shouldn't they all help? Junior Golf, High School teams and new members should be introduced to the care of the course first but unfortunately they are not ... Hence, the birth of another video.

Unwritten Rules of Golf is a video designed for just that purpose. It covers cart usage, divot repair, ballmark repair, sand-trap raking and is designed to speed up play. The actual tape is only 12 minutes but we have prepared a 2 hour continuous loop version for Pro Shop, grill or lockerroom use. Maybe, just maybe with repetition some of our golfers might get the point. Some **never** will!

The 12 minute sampler is \$19.95 and the loop version is \$49.95 (\$4.00 S&H). Most people at our club feel it should run all the time to be that "constant reminder".

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