

## How Ya Looking?

by Brian Bossert

It has been a long time since I penned an article for **The Bull Sheet**. In fact, I have never written an article and if you can last the six or seven minutes it takes to read this one, you may wonder why I ever bothered.

For starters, I had a hard time coming up with a topic. I was going to inform everyone about the ins and outs of erecting a new maintenance building, but I've talked plenty on that subject in the last year. Then I thought I could tell you about what a great PR tool our new goose chasing Border Collie has turned out to be. However, I think TR more or less covered that before he went north of the border to grow turf. Then I thought I could share my experience with Prograss on greens, but I didn't know if John Turner would like that because, "That product isn't labeled for greens, you know". Then reality started kicking in and I realized that I don't really know anything about anything that no one else doesn't know. But, in the back of my mind this professional image business kept popping up and I knew that was the theme I should write about.

In fact, I wanted to directly address clothing and what the superintendent wears to work. Furthermore, I wanted to tell you about particular brands and good and bad shoes, etc. (I told you that you may wonder why I ever bothered). Admittedly, I am stepping out on a limb here. I have never seen an article on this subject matter and I am going to attempt to write it without consulting with Al Fierst, the snappiest dresser I know. I'm asking for trouble.

I am going to work from head to toe, but before getting started, I am going to make a few assumptions. I am assuming that not all superintendents have turned into white collared pencil pushers and that a coat and tie is not part of the standard outfit. I am also going to assume that occasionally a glob of grease or a can of marking paint graces your shirt sleeve or pant leg. Lastly, I am assuming that your wife doesn't buy your clothes for you.

A hat isn't a must for the superintendent, but it most certainly keeps the sun's dangerous rays off your face. People in our line of work should take skin cancer seriously. I recommend with hats and shirts, to endorse your own clubs logo, the MAGCO logo or the GCSAA logo. If you can't spring for one of those, there is always a Chipco or Cushman hat to be found. One of the biggest superintendent lies is "Hey, I paid for this cap!"

Sunglasses are a great idea. I don't know if the purple Oakley's are going to win any points with the members, but BluBlocker's actually help you see wilt before the naked eye can spot it. They are especially helpful for the handwatering crew who may need extra help in identifying those summer "hot spots".

Shirts are a personal thing, but being comfortable is the most important consideration. I wear large for the extra room even though medium fits just fine. Dark colors attract heat on summer days and should be avoided. However, getting soiled is not against my religion, so I usually avoid white. The 100% pique cotton shirts require little or no ironing, and that is important to us single types.

A circular graphic with a spiral background. At the top, the text "Wadsworth Pumps" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the words "Sales • Service • Repair" are arranged in a horizontal line. Underneath, there are four rows of text, each with a product name followed by a list of services: "Watertronics • prefabricated pump stations", "Air-O-Lator • floating fountains & aerators", "Cla-Val • automatic control valves", and "Crispin • air release, foot, & check valves". At the bottom of the circle, the phone number "(708) 394-4490" is displayed in a large, bold font, with "• Arlington Heights •" written below it.

**Wadsworth  
Pumps**

Sales • Service • Repair

Watertronics • prefabricated pump stations  
Air-O-Lator • floating fountains & aerators  
Cla-Val • automatic control valves  
Crispin • air release, foot, & check valves  
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Finally, project the spirit of teamwork by wearing your club's logo. I was flat out told not to wear my former employees logo. It was in turn agreed that my current employer would buy me several shirts and sweaters annually. I am sure there is room in the uniform budget for you to get the same, if you are not already.

As far as sweaters and the like, I think a high quality sweatshirt is appropriate. Pete Leuzinger looked just fine donning one in today's Daily Herald. Don't skimp when it comes to other forms of outer wear. Cheap rain suits are a waste of money. I have had my Gore-tex rain suit for four years and it still keeps the water out. In the long run it beats those fifty dollar pieces of plastic which don't do much for keeping the cold out either.

I guess pants are a personal matter as well. If you are over 55 years of age, polyester is a viable option. However, cotton slacks are the ticket for me. Dockers make a pleated, wrinkle free "classic fit" style and are available in a wide assortment of colors. There is also a brand by the name of Savane that comes in a wrinkle free, pleated and cuffed style. I picked up three pair at J.C. Penney and they have worn well for over three years. If I were to black ball any slacks, it would be anything from the American Eagle store. I have had several pair of slacks tear on the seam and their merchandise is overpriced.

I am sure plenty of people still wear jeans, but I don't think that projects the image of today's superintendent. I do occasionally wear them in the winter when my club is closed, but never in season. In fact, I wear shorts on Mondays when my club is closed and the weather is warm. I get as hot and uncomfortable as the next guy, but I don't think someone responsible for the better part of a million dollars of my member's money commands much respect in a pair of glorified swim trunks.

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(How Ya Looking? continued)

So, that gets us down to the toe tops. If you feel lucky in your favorite pair of socks with the golfer on them, by all means wear them. I prefer the short, white athletic socks. My legs stay cooler without a long sock and athletic socks are absorbent and offer support. Your shoes should offer support as well. Even though all we do is ride around in our cart and tell people what to do, we still end up on our feet a great deal.

I admit to being a name brand guy and have purchased at least a half dozen pair of Timberlands. My experience is that the best shoes don't last any longer than some of the less costly shoes and I replaced those Timberlands inside of a year every time. I found a great leather boot from Carolina that costs less than \$70 and a good one from Bay Colony that didn't last as long, but only went for \$50. I think some of the outdoor tennis style shoes that Reebok makes are a great option once the dew burns off. They come in conservative colors, so they don't look like tennis shoes. Even though my boots are only ankle tops, they get heavy after those 14 hour days.

Finally, I suggest that each superintendent wear what he feels is appropriate. The key is that we are neat and clean. However, remember that people do make judgements, fair or not, based on appearance and the era of blue jeans and flannel shirts is one of the past. I think our pay scales have elevated to the point where we can afford to look better. In fact, we can't afford not to. If you pay for your own clothing, put the expenses into next years budget. For \$500, you can drastically change your look, but you won't please everyone. I once had a fellow tell me after a Green Committee meeting that I was overdressed and that he would prefer to see a little more dirt on my hands.

In closing, I think this article writing stuff isn't so tough. There are obviously an abundance of aspects to our profession; pick a topic and let your colleagues laugh at what you have to say. If you hung in there until the end of this article, I appreciate your patience and you can give me a call if you are interested in putting Prograss somewhere it isn't labeled to go.



## ILCA Announces 1995 Summer Field Day

The Illinois Landscape Contractors Association Summer Field Day will be held on Wednesday, August 2, 1995 at Ball Seed Company in West Chicago, Illinois. Set amid the Ball Trial Gardens and trees, this show promises the latest in nursery stock, flowers, power equipment, small equipment, tools, vehicles, and various landscape services. Whether exhibiting in one of the 234 booths or attending to be updated on what's new in the industry, set aside the date today.

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