

A Personal Friend

by Les Rutan, Beverly C.C.

I'm going to relate a story about a close personal friend of mine who recently received some disturbing news from his family doctor. You see, my close personal friend worked outside virtually every day (being in the golf course management business), but he didn't particularly like to wear a hat or grease himself up with sunscreen before work each day. He never worried about the sun as a kid although his fair complexion lent itself to sunburn quite readily and he never really tanned completely despite repeated exposure during the summer months. When he entered the business some eighteen years ago, the sun was considered a friend and a benefit not only for his grass growing responsibilities but for luxury of spending his days outside basking in it's light. Sometimes, my close and personal friend wished that the sun would pop behind a big cloud bank so he wouldn't have to worry about wilting grass and syringing, but for the most part, he enjoyed seeing the sun come up and go back down on a daily basis. Thrived on it actually.

About five years ago, my close and personal friend noticed a small spot on his face between his nose and eye and dismissed it as a pimple or something along those lines. About twice a year, he noticed that this spot would bleed a little and then return to being just a little spot. Now you would think that most people would figure out that something wasn't right and all the public service announcements listing warning signs for skin cancer and such would ring a bell in my close and personal friend's head. However, he was and still is a stubborn old jackass and he figured stuff like this happened to other people and not him, so why worry, it will go away. It didn't. Every year it got a little bigger and more noticeable until his cousin (an oncologist) told him it would be a good idea to have it looked at.

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Okay, my close and personal friend said, no big deal, I'll go to the doctor's office, have it scraped off and that will be the end of this non-painful nuisance. Not to be, my friend found out after the biopsy came back. Basal cell carcinoma, the report said. Skin cancer. Needs to be cut out because it grows more inward than it protrudes outward. No big deal, the reconstructive surgeon said, the surgical effects will only be noticeable for about six to twelve weeks. How will you know that you removed all the cancer, my close and personal friend said? We'll send a frozen tissue sample to the lab before we close you up to make sure. If it comes back positive, we'll just keep digging. Terrific, said my friend. Suddenly, my close and personal friend realized that all the years of vanity (hats make me look even dorkier than usual) and sun worship (don't I look good with this reddish bronze hue to my face and arms) had reached up and bit him on the butt. His life and his career could continue but changes would have to be made. Hats (the bigger the better) and sunscreen (grease or not — with a strap for his glasses to keep them from falling off his stubborn, moronic head) would become a part of

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With the spring over-seeding and new projects being done, please remember to save the "Blue Tags" and turn them in to Mike Bavier or Dudley Smith. Those tags are cash for research funds. Let's make an effort to save them.

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(A Personal Friend continued)

his regular attire. My close and personal friend has resigned himself to the hat aspect, but continues to resist the sunscreen until "it gets a little hotter".

His wife, however, has warned that she will show up at work every day to make sure he's protected so I think he'll be lathering up sooner rather than later. His kids (all four of them) are also concerned and even bought him a hat to wear with #1 Dad emblazoned on the front. His eight year-old even went as far as to confide in her teacher at school and a classmate which promptly was misunderstood and word came back that my close and personal friend was on his last legs. The principal called his house to offer condolences and other parents stopped my friend's wife in the school parking lot to offer sympathy and prayers. My close and personal friend wishes that he just would have been smart enough to protect himself before any of this happened, not only for his own health, but to keep his family from worrying about him.

If there's a moral to this story, it would have to be that I, that is, my close and personal friend — have another chance to continue to live a relatively normal life and career if proper precautions are taken. **If you don't already, wear a hat and use sunscreen when necessary and resist the notion that you're immune from your own stupidity. I wasn't.**

Credit: "Verdue"

MAGCS, GCSAA, and Golf

Birdie: To GCSAA Director and MAGCS member Tommy D. Witt, CGCS for assuming the considerable mantle of responsibility for the organization of the yearly Superintendents Prayer Breakfast.

Birdie: To the MAGCS for organizing and arranging a very fine "Spanish Seminar" at Oakbrook Hills. And to Kerry Blatteau for hosting the seminar.

Birdie: To the CDGA for always striving to represent the very best for golf.

Birdie: To the MAGCS Education Committee for an outstanding educational offering at the March MAGCS meeting at Oakbrook Hills. You missed it — YOU LOSE!!

Birdie: To the golf courses of the Audubon Cooperative Bird Sanctuary Program.

Bogey: To Broadcaster Paul Harvey and his generally unfriendly attitude toward golf courses and the Superintendents who MANAGE them.

Bogey: To the seemingly prevailing attitude of General Managers that the Golf Course Superintendent is simply not of an equal caliber and must be summarily dominated. We know otherwise ...

Bogey: To divots, ballmarks, golf carts, geese, and well ... you get the picture.

Bogey: To club members and golf patrons wanting too much too soon too fast.

Bogey: To these threatening times; over regulated regulations and an under appreciative and intolerant golfing clientele.

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