



James McNair
Orchard Valley G.C.

Spread the Word

A new golfing season has begun. We have had several months to prepare for the onslaught of ballmarks, divots, weeds and diseases. We have also had time to prepare for the social pressures of our profession. As chairman of the Long Range Planning and Public Relations Committees, my focus this year for the MAGCS has vectored towards the social aspects of our jobs.

What is our professional image? How can we enhance it? During our March meeting at Nordic Hills, our educational speaker Bobby Gee commented that GCSAA has done a rather lousy job of promoting our image. I believe she was referring to the fact that they were doing a poor job of marketing us. I agree with her to some extent. GCSAA has done a good job of helping us to be the best educated of all golf course staff members. But I don't think that they have made this known to our employers. Doesn't the golf course superintendent spend more hours in the classroom than the club manager or golf professional? Perhaps GCSAA has statistics on this and can make this fact known. If we are being better educated than other club staff members, then

let's see some promotional material touting this fact.

How can a positive image be projected? The avenues of public relations and recognition are a good start. Public relations is taking our message to the outside world. No "preaching to the choir" here. It is how the community and media view us. Are we the polluters responsible for groundwater contamination, or are we the naturalists that provide habitat for wildlife? How are you viewed in your community? The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program has done a lot to give the populace a more favorable impression of us, but this is only known if we promote ourselves and make known our positive impacts on the environment. In a word, it is publicity.

The other avenue to a positive image is recognition. This is a reward that comes with respect and good publicity. We have had many MAGCS members receive recognition because of their efforts in the ACSP. Another type of recognition comes in the form of premium jobs being landed by MAGCS members. Several employers from far away have come to the Midwest to find the best in the business. The media has also recognized our efforts to humanely control the goose populations on our courses by the use

of dogs. We are being recognized by the media as the source of the impetus for the greatest improvement to putting surfaces: the spikeless shoe. We have had several superintendents that have had books published. Most recently, Brad Anderson had an article published in *Landscape Management*, and Luke Cella had an article published in *The USGA Green Section Record*. Great job, guys! We are making progress in being recognized, but there is much work left to do.

The Public Relations Committee serves to present a positive image of the MAGCS member. We have information packets that may be of value to you in contacting and dealing with the media. We can help you write a press release. Committee members are Tim Anderson, Trent Bradford, Dave Gelino, Tod Hopphan, and Mike Mumper. Help us promote our profession. Help us spread the word. ■