



A Few Thoughts from the New Kid on the Block

When Brian Bossert called and asked if I would be interested in filling a position on the MAGCS Board of Directors, I was excited at the opportunity. But when he went on to offer me double the standard compensation for a first-year director's position and threw in benefits, I thought, "Wow—this is too good to be true." Well, at my first meeting, I quickly learned three things:

- 1) $2 \times 0 = 0$;
- 2) "Benefits" is a term used to refer to free coffee; and
- 3) My director's column for *On Course* was due by the end of the month.

Having absorbed these three vital pieces of information, I carefully evaluated my circumstances and determined that my addiction to caffeine had finally reached a point where I truly would do anything for a cup of coffee.

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All kidding aside, I am excited to serve on the Board and I have been asked to work with the Environmental Committee. The Environmental Committee is a fairly new committee and as such, our primary goal for this year is to develop a formal standard operating procedure for the Committee. This SOP will outline the purpose, structure and duties of the Committee and its members. It will serve as a guide under which future versions of the Environmental Committee will operate. As we work to develop our SOP, we will gather information from the GCSAA, USGA and other allied organizations. However, most important is input from the membership of the MAGCS. This is the key to developing a SOP that reflects the views of the membership. If you would like to express your vision for the Environmental Committee, I would ask that you contact me at 815-469-5903.

Indeed, environmental stewardship is the responsibility of all superintendents and there are countless ways to express your commitment to protecting the environment. The following is a brief list of ways to demonstrate stewardship.

- 1) **Join an association committed to improving the environment.** This could include the Audubon Society, Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanical Garden or your local garden club.
- 2) **Undertake an environmental management program (EMP).** The EMP is offered through the GCSAA. These seminars and self-study courses can help superintendents establish themselves as the most

(continued on page 6)

knowledgeable person at their facilities when it comes to environmental topics.

3) Communicate about IPM.

Sure, we all understand and utilize IPM practices. But do we convey this to our membership and patrons? Next time you are racking your brain for a topic for that monthly newsletter, how about a couple quick paragraphs on how your course practices and implements integrated pest management techniques on a routine basis.

4) Leverage newsletters.

For many of us, this is one of our primary means of communicating with our members. In the winter, when course news is a bit lacking, you could write an article highlighting the benefits that golf courses provide for the community, the economy and the environment. Two

good references are a 1994 publication from the USGA entitled *Golf and the Environment* and a 1992 publication from GCSAA titled *GCSAA Government Relations Desk Manual*.

5) Carry a camera in your cart.

You know the old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." This year, I have kept a camera in my golf cart. Having it available has allowed me to capture several photos of wildlife at home on the golf course. These photos can be compiled to develop a wildlife photo album that can be displayed at the pro shop or clubhouse.

6) Include a line item in your budget for environmental expenditures.

It doesn't have to have a large dollar amount attached to it. Just the fact that you include it demonstrates that

your facility is serious about the role of environmental steward. The monies in this line item can be used for any number of environmental-related expenditures, including: nesting boxes, association dues, waste-oil removal, pesticide training seminars for the crew, water-quality testing, or projects that incorporate naturalized areas on the property.

These are just a few of the many things that each of us can do at our own facilities to demonstrate that as individuals and as an organization, we are committed to enhancing and protecting the environment.

As for my addiction to caffeine, from what I understand admitting you have a problem is the first step on the road to recovery. But in the meantime, I'll take my coffee black with one sugar.



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