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## President's Message

Anyone who works with the public is well aware of those individuals who like to complain. Superintendents are well aware of those specific members who make an art out of criticism. How do we effectively handle those complaints?

Preliminary research is suggesting that being the recipient of complaints may contribute to excessive worry, burnout, and perhaps physical ailments. Yet, inherent in the simple complaint is a wealth of information. As a result, progressive superintendents use the information to their benefit and find the positive effects far outweigh any momentary discomfort.

In order to deal with a complaint effectively you should approach it in three ways: problem solving, a change of mind, and future thinking. With this type of approach the basic complaint can be seen as information rather than criticism; an opportunity for improvement; a displeasure with a situation rather than a personal attack; and most important of all, a chance to inform and get the complainer on your team.

When dealing with complaints there are several steps that will help you succeed. 1. The first is to never promise what you can't deliver. Set realistic expectations for your golfers. 2. Don't deny that problems exist. What may be perceived as a problem to a golfer may only be a misinterpretation but it still exists in the eyes of the golfer until you explain the logical reason. 3. Treat each complaint as unique. After accepting the uniqueness, then explore. Why did it happen, and is it a symptom of a bigger problem? 4. The next step is to react. After you analyze the problem figure out what can be accomplished with the solution. 5. Put the operations in motion to correct the problem. 6. The final step, and most important, is to follow up. The follow-up has two purposes. First, check to see if the problem has been solved and if the individual who complained is content. Next, follow up and verify that the golf course has used the information provided by the complainer so that the problem will not occur again.

We all realize that not every complaint is a valid one. However, you should give each complaint or criticism due consideration. Half of the so-called problems on the golf course are only perceived as problems due to a lack of knowledge or mis-information. Through good communications and public relations we can work wonders with complaints. Some of the worst complainers can be converted to support your efforts if you take the time to respond to their criticism in the proper manner.

**Bruce R. Williams, CGCS**  
**President, MAGCS**

## Director's Column



by Ray Schmitz

Wow — what a challenge this season has been. It started with damaging floods in December, March, and May. The last flood occurring May 25th. Since then there has been no significant rainfall in the past 10 weeks. To complicate the situation I have experienced a deep well breakdown and a rash of irrigation pipe and sprinkler head problems as the irrigation system is used to maximum capacity night after night.

As usual, golfers' demands and expectations remain high and we as superintendents are required to do that little extra. If it is any consolation, I once worked for a man who always enjoyed a challenge such as this. He felt when situations for growing grass were ideal then anyone could have a good golf course. With his ability and determination he could present a quality golf course even at times when mother nature did not cooperate.

A few bright spots have occurred this season — a new post emergence herbicide that does an excellent job of removing crabgrass in a new seeding has been offered by BASF Chemical Co. with an EUP label. Also, a tip from Les Rutan at Beverly Country Club explaining how to make soaker hose out of old 1" irrigation hose has really helped to supply water to hard to irrigate areas and eliminate a lot of hand watering.

Meanwhile, I have not entirely lost sight of my responsibility to the MAGCS as vice president. One of my duties is to set up an operating budget and keep a watchful eye on the finances of the association. Financially we are strong and now in a position to establish a video library for use by the membership to aid in training their employees in various aspects of the golf course operation. This training and documentation is now required by law as part of the employees' right to know act of 1989.

Lately, I noticed when I play golf during the drought conditions that my drives are going a lot farther. I like to think that I am getting stronger and becoming a better player and not taking advantage of the hard ground caused by the dry weather. The true test will be in the MAGCS golf championship in September held at Ridgemoor Country Club. Hope to see you there.

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## A Note From the President

Almost two years ago the Commercial Members Advisory Committee was formed. As the president of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents I appointed Phil Taylor to chair this new group. This committee was formed to give a collective voice to the commercial sector of the MAGCS membership. The committee is still in its infancy but it has a defined set of goals and objectives and the group is an important part of the entire association. Without the support of our commercial sector, our association would not be able to operate the various programs we offer at such reasonable prices. I would appreciate it if each of you would take the time to respond to the survey that has been developed by the committee. It will help them in the upcoming year.

**Bruce R. Williams, CGCS  
MAGCS President**

## Commercial Members Advisory Committee M.A.G.C.S. Membership Survey

The following survey questions represent the attempts of the C.M.A.C. to better understand the perspective, position, and opinion of M.A.G.C.S. superintendent membership as it relates to Class E (Industry Reps) members. Your cooperation in completing and returning the survey card will help your C.M.A.C. to better serve your needs.

As a Committee we thank you in advance.

1. Are Industry Reps doing enough to make you aware of industry advances? (circle one)  
Yes  
No
2. The average Industry Reps works how many hours per week? (circle one)  
a. 20 to 30 hrs/wk  
b. 30 to 40 hrs/wk  
c. 40 to 50 hrs/wk  
d. 50 to 60 hrs/wk
3. The average Industry Rep has an annual income of: (circle one)  
a. \$25,000 to \$50,000  
b. \$50,000 to \$75,000  
c. \$75,000 to \$100,000  
d. over \$100,000
4. Do you think an Industry Rep should sit on the MAGCS Executive Board as a non-voting member? (circle one)  
Yes  
No
5. Rank the following occupations in order of credibility and integrity: (1 highest, 6 lowest)  
a. Club manager  
b. Golf pro  
c. Superintendent  
d. Club member  
e. University professor  
f. Industry Rep

(continued page 4)

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6. The average Industry Rep has reached which education level: (circle one)
  - a. High School only
  - b. 2 year college degree
  - c. 4 year college degree
  - d. Masters degree in related field
7. Are majority of your buying decisions influenced by the level of Industry Rep support to the MAGCS? (circle one)
  - a. always
  - b. sometimes
  - c. occasionally
  - d. never
8. Rank the following sources of useful information: (1 most useful, 5 least useful)
  - ☐ Trade journals
  - ☐ Conventions
  - ☐ Industry Reps
  - ☐ Extension and education personnel
  - ☐ Fellow superintendents
9. Are you satisfied with the following aspects of the National Convention Hospitality Room? (circle one after each letter)
  - a. hours      Yes      No
  - b. size of room      Yes      No
  - c. food      Yes      No
  - d. accessibility      Yes      No
10. Which one of the following would you prefer as it pertains to National Convention Hospitality Rooms? (circle one)
  - a. 3 nights status quo
  - b. 1 night extra special, (memorable)

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## No "Ray Gerber Editorial Award" in 1991!

It seems that everyone expects everyone else to write articles, and no one takes it upon themselves to contribute one. We have had only 5 superintendents write an article in the past twelve months.

Article 5 of the guidelines for the award state: "There must be at least six articles in a qualifying year (September thru August) to be considered. If less than six articles in any one year, those qualifying will be carried over to the next year(s), till there are six articles to be judged."

Those qualifying to enter for the award this past year and are being carried over to 1992 are:

September 1990 — "Noise/Nuisance Ordinance" by Brian Green, Sunset Valley Golf Club

November 1990 — "State of the Art in France" by Steve Cook, Golf de Joyenval

December 1990 — "A New Green Construction Technique" by Nick Hongisto, Schaumburg Golf Club

March 1991 — "Birth of a Video" by Jerry Mack, Lake Bluff Golf Club

July 1991 — "Inform Your Golfers" by John Gurke, Aurora Country Club.

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## M E M O

**To: Golf Course Superintendent**  
**From: Experienced Memo Writer**  
**Date: Today**  
**Re: Tips on Writing Memos**

Some of you may sweat over writing memorandums. Others may find it a delight. Whatever, the more effective you can make them, the better it will be for yourself as well as the recipient of your memos.

Often, a well-written memo can be the difference in persuading someone to your viewpoint or in edging out someone for a new job.

Here are some tips:

**1. Know why you're writing a memo.** Write a purpose statement to yourself that tells you what *you* expect your readers to do or know when they finish reading your memo. Refer to your purpose statement as you write to be certain you're staying on track.

**2. Quickly let your readers know the reason for your memo.** Get to the point. Keeping people in suspense is for mystery novels.

**3. Anticipate reactions.** Chances are your memo should or will be read by anyone interested in the topic it addresses ... or you shouldn't be writing the memo. Consider the perspectives of all the possible readers.

**4. Answer the questions they may have ... clearly.** If your memo shows that you are sensitive to others' needs and interest, your credibility will be enhanced.

**5. Does your memo appear to be too long?** Take time to revise it. Be certain you say exactly what you *want* to say. Extra words dilute the strength of your message.

**6. Polish your memo.** Once you are comfortable with its organization, look at the memo's finer points.

**7. Keep the tone of your memo natural.** Read it aloud; listen to the language. Does anything sound awkward? Depending upon the readers of your memo, you may use an informal tone ... or a more formal one.

**8. Be courteous.**

**9. Be factual.**

**10. Be specific.**

**11. Be brief.**

**12. Don't write anything you wouldn't say publicly.** Privacy isn't guaranteed, even if you mark a document "personal" or "confidential." (*Often, sensitive issues are best dealt with face-to-face.*)

**13. If you write a negative memo, wait a day before sending it.** Should you reconsider, shred the memo ... Wastebaskets aren't private property.

Strong writing skills can gain you visibility and respect. If you find writing difficult, obtain a good writing handbook. Some diligent effort can improve your spelling and grammar.

All types of writers continually seek to improve their skills. Developing your memo technique is an excellent step toward a good, clear writing style that will benefit you in many ways.

**Credit: Hole Notes 8/91**



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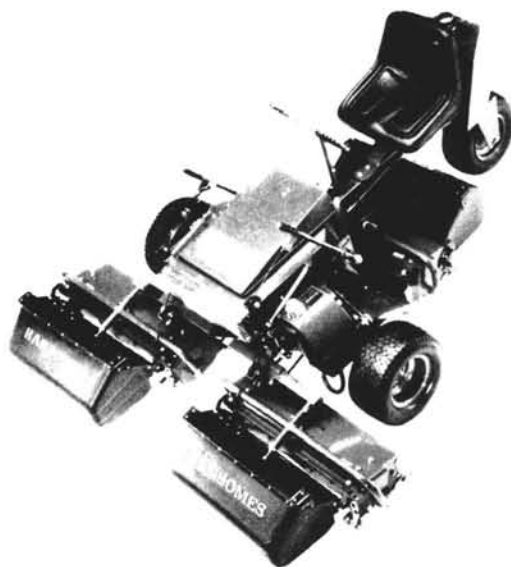
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## Experiment at Cantigny

Tony Rzadzki, Asst. Supt.  
Cantigny Golf Club

In the March 1991 issue of the Golf Course Management magazine you may have read an article entitled "A Non-traditional Tee" written by Frank Rich. He is the superintendent of the Cato Golf Club. Mr. Rich had a problem tee on the fourth hole of his golf course. He had an extremely shaded site from trees that did not belong to his golf course and could not keep a well established stand of turf there. Mr. Rich decided to try an innovative technique to solve his problem. He installed a "Novatee" on a raised platform deck.

I'm sure many of you saw the Novatee at last winter's convention in Las Vegas. Well, I'm here to report that my boss Mike Nass saw it also. And guess what, Cantigny Golf Club now has a Novatee as well.

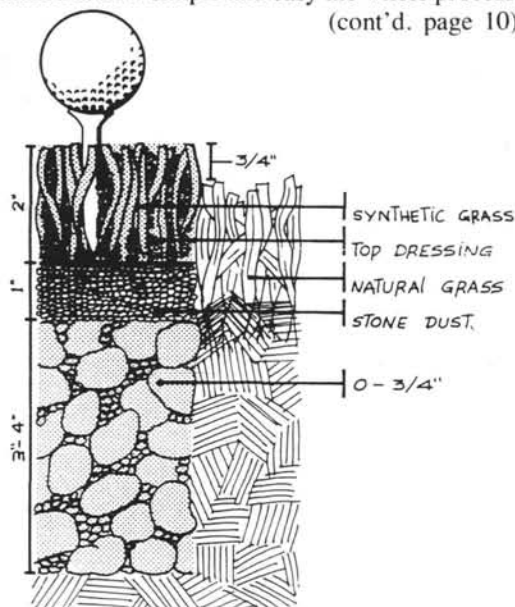
When the subject first came to light last winter I was as skeptical as Mr. Rich was. "Novatee"? "Artificial turf on a golf course?" "What a pain in the butt project this is going to be?" "Will it work?" These were my first thoughts and reactions to the whole idea. I tried to put off the installation of the new tee after it arrived from Canada, but soon the higher ups were wondering what happened to our \$900 super tee. So I misgivingly bent to their demands and soon the project was underway.

We have some shady tee areas here, but our thoughts were to install the tee experimentally on our semi-private lesson tee of our driving range. We wanted to see how it performed and if it performed as well as the tee at the Cato Golf Club. We have future plans of possibly installing six or more teeing areas on our public use tee. This would give us the potential of having our range facility open year round during mild winters or opening our range earlier at the start of the season and closing it later at the end of the year, if need be.

Our public range tee goes through considerable abuse during the season and has been resodded twice since we opened in 1989! So Novatee has a potential and we had a definite need and opportunity to try it out.

We did not have to be as sophisticated as the Cato Club was in installing their tee. We placed ours right at turf level which is the normal installation technique used. Once the project got started I was amazed at how simple and easy the whole process was.

(cont'd. page 10)



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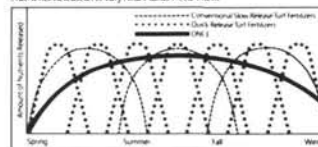
	15-0-30	20-0-20	24-4-12	24-4-12	24-4-12
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Plant Dependent Soil Conditioning Agents for use in sodas	0	0	0	0	0
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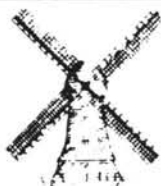
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(Cantigny continued)

The difference between installing the tee at turf level and installing it on a platform is that we had to excavate out four to six inches of soil and fill the hole with aggregate instead of filling a box. Once the gravel was installed and tamped we rolled out the green carpet. That's exactly how it looks; like a plastic, green shag rug. The synthetic grass fibers are actually two inches long. The idea is to "topdress" in the secret materials that the manufacturer sends with the turf and eventually make the rug stand up and behave as natural bluegrass turf does ... to even hold a golf ball on a tee.

As we worked the material into the rug I could begin to see the finished produce develop. It was hotter than hell that day, but we patiently kept on raking in material until the rug looked like bluegrass with soil topdressing on it. I was soon able to put a tee into the turf and I knew that the tee was ready to play. I placed a ball on the tee and let her rip. I couldn't believe it. It worked, and I even hit my ball straight. I hit a few more balls off a tee then decided to try a couple right on the synthetic turf without a tee. It was truly amazing. It feels just like real turf. The footing is soft yet firm and the ball sits up just as if it were on short cropped bluegrass. Amazing. The only complaint that we have about the tee is that sometimes if a non-teed up ball is struck too low, some of the topdress material may get on your arms, but it is very clean and easily wipes off.

The cost of \$900 for the synthetic rug and the topdressing materials and about \$500 more for gravel and labor may sound like a lot of money for 144 square feet of turf. But if you consider the fact that there is not maintenance and that this small piece of turf can generate revenue when your natural turf is unplayable, it may be a wash in the long run. Innovations in the 90's such as these make our work a little easier, interesting, and exciting.

In closing I must say that our experiment at Cantigny was quite successful and that I was very pleased with the performance of our Novatee.

## Suburban Extension Office Relocates

The suburban offices of the Cooperative Extension Service in Cook County have relocated to Countryside.

After more than a half a century with offices at both ends of the County, the Extension Service has combined the Tinley Park and the Rolling Meadows offices.

Home gardeners and professional horticulturists will continue to receive the service to which they have been accustomed.

Horticulturist Carol Beatty, James Fizzell and Gregory Stack may be reached at:

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