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the Bull Sheet

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On Course With the President

One might suppose that by this time we are all due a rest, and a considerable one at that, from the ravages, stresses, and inherent problems of the golf season. True enough — we are due a well deserved break from what has turned out to be an extraordinarily long (it seems) and arduous golf season. There are a lot of tired voices I hear as I pick up the telephone and listen to whomever is there. The problems have not necessarily been huge, or entirely related to turfgrass but it does seem that a lot of long hours and some rather nagging golf course and people type difficulties have contributed to what amounts to be a real long season on the links.

From what I can gather as the conversations develop, the difficulties are somewhat hard to pin down. I do hear a lot more comments regarding the increasing demands of the memberships and more and more pressure from the clubhouse management people. And yes, there are those ominipresent disease and insect, etc. problems to fight as the seemingly endless summer presses on. Also there is the usual and never ending search for the ideal "Equipment Manager" (yeah, I know the moniker is a bit flamboyant, but it is a nice title) who can manage the golf course maintenance fleet and him/herself at the same time. I know it is a tall order, but someone has got to be capable of both. There are, thankfully, plenty of excellent Equipment Managers and Assistant Superintendents to help fight the frustrations of the season. They are there to support us and fulfill eagerly the directives of day to day golf course management operations. But they never seem to entirely grasp the angst the Superintendent is subjected to during the course of the season. If only they knew ...

Well, the end of the season long struggle (if it has indeed been a struggle) draws near. We've made it; we are survivors. Good enough I say.

Let's get on with the best part of the golf season and the best part of the year. There's golf to play, football games to attend, autumn leaves to watch, and best of all — ski trips to plan. Or whatever else you may do to distance yourself from the haunts of this season past.

There are, thankfully, plenty of excellent Equipment Managers and Assistant Superintendents to help fight the frustrations of the season.

Bob Williams used to circle August 23 on his wall calendar, and as the assistant in residence at the time I wondered why ... Bob informed me that while the golf season is NOT over by any means; if a Superintendent still had some quality turf and some remaining sanity and his job on that date — he had done pretty well. I've circled August 23 on my calendar ever since.

Bottom line. What can I say after all of this? TGIF!! Thank goodness it's Fall!

ATF

Two Great Tools

by Roger A. Stewart, Jr., CGCS

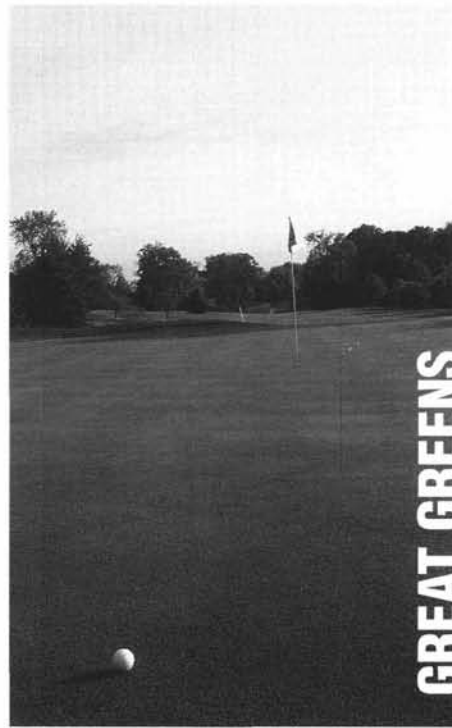
There is a great tool available to Golf Course Superintendents here in the Chicago area that is used by only a few of us. It is a communication link that is quick and easy to use. That hint should be enough for everyone to recognize what I'm talking about. It's our own computer bulletin board called TURFTALK. The only thing you need is a computer with a modem and some communication software and you can become a part of a group that shares information on a daily basis. The main topics of messages sent through TURFTALK are golf turf related, but there are also other users from parks and businesses which only serve to broaden the range of information available. Best of all the only cost is the phone call. The entire BBS is funded by M.A.G.C.S. and is one of the benefits of being a member.

Participating in TURFTALK is very easy and requires very little time. If you don't have a computer and modem in your office, perhaps you have one at home. TURFTALK operates 24 hours a day which makes home use even more attractive. Call me at 708/898-6139 if you need more information or talk to any of the current users like Bruce Williams, Mike Schiller, Nick Hongisto, Ray Schmitz, Dan Dinelli along with many others. The fall season is approaching and more time will be available to tune into TURFTALK. Try it, you'll like it.

Another great tool many superintendents make use of in this area is provided by the CDGA. We all know Dr. Randy Kane as the house doctor when it comes to helping solve turf problems and he does a great job. Recently, we have been battling Black Layer syndrome here and Dr. Randy Kane was a key player in a team of consultants who helped us formulate a course of action to rectify the problem. I appreciated very much having a trusted and familiar face there to help. My thanks to the "Doc" and the CDGA who fund his position. I encourage all my peers in this area to utilize Dr. Kane's talent and abilities to help solve turf problems at their courses. I also encourage the M.A.G.C.S. to seriously consider expanding their support for Dr. Kane's position to the fullest extent possible. In return, we all receive the benefits of his expertise.

We all look for ways to improve our performance and do the best job we can and I hope these two methods are beneficial to you. Have a great fall season.

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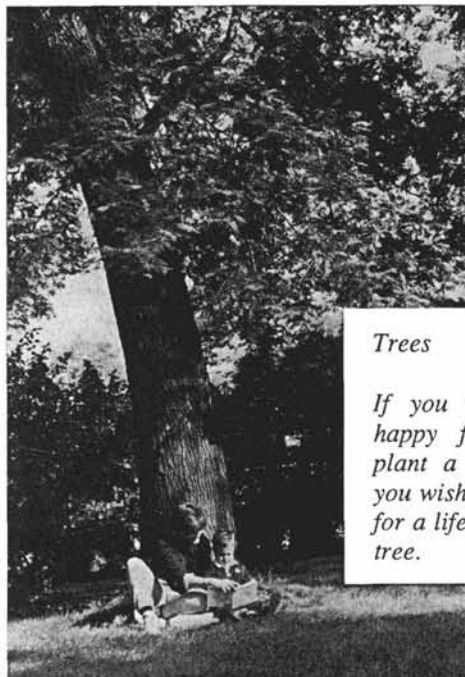
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Negotiate Your Way to the Top

by Mike Hamilton, CCS, Harbor Club

With new governmental regulations, water rationing and environmental issues staring us in the face, superintendents are increasingly concerned about our industry's future. Something I feel threatens the credibility of our industry just as much as superintendents who undersell themselves to get a job. Maybe this bothers me more because my career is on its way. Many superintendents are not being paid what they are worth, and this undersells the industry.

Personally, I feel no superintendent should make less than \$50,000/year in his total package. There are ways to turn a \$30,000 base salary into a \$50,000 package. The key is to first sell yourself, then negotiate a good contract.

There are four steps in the total hiring process — the resume, the interview, the negotiation and the contract agreement. All four are equally significant.

The resume should be short but impressive. Unless you are well-versed in resume preparation, I suggest using a professional resume service. It will cost, but it will be money well spent. These experts know how to make your resume alluring, and they know what employers look for in an employee. Chances are, you would not try to defend yourself in a court of law; you'd hire an expert. Do yourself a favor and do the same with your resume. Along with the resume, include as many creditable letters of recommendation as possible. Make sure these are not just friends who will put in a good word for you. The employer will know the difference. Most importantly in your resume, make sure there are no typos.

The cover letter may be more important than the resume itself. Be short and concise. Too often people squeeze their life story into a cover letter. Simply announce you are enclosing a resume and state when you would be available for an interview. Let your resume do the talking.

You have been granted an interview. The employer must be impressed, or you wouldn't be there. Now get informed. Find out everything you can about the club prior to your interview. Try anticipating possible questions so you can give impressive answers. Talk to the previous superintendent. Find out why he left, how much he made, his likes and dislikes, as well as likes and dislikes of the ownership and membership. Tour the golf course at least once and take notes so you can suggest improvements. Probe the greens to determine soil mix, ask to see the equipment, maintenance building and pump station. These inquiries are impressive and show a genuine concern. Convince the employer you are the greatest. But never, never discuss your needs until you are offered the job. You've done your homework, sold yourself, and have been offered the job. It is now time to negotiate.

There are three factors to remember during a good negotiation: 1) neither party gets everything they want; 2) each party feels they have gained something; 3) both parties retain their self-respect. By understanding these characteristics, you can retain confidence in the negotiation.

The third factor, retaining self-respect, is very important for both employee and employer. If you settle for less than minimum, you will always look for something better. Your attitude going into the negotiations should be that this job will be yours for the next 20 years instead of just a stepping stone.

(continued page 9)



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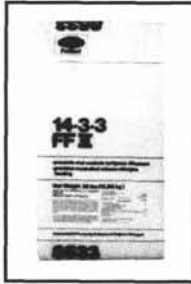
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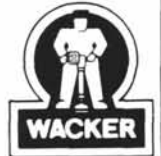


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(Negotiate continued)

Any other idea is unfair to yourself and to your employer. On the other hand, if you ruin your employer's self-respect, they may never feel they are getting their money's worth and at the first opportunity, you'll be fired.

During negotiations, meet where you will be comfortable. If there are other people in the room, introduce yourself, and be sure to remember their names. Take charge with a general overview of the situation, then defer to them. Talk to the person who has the ultimate authority to deal and allow the employer to make the first offer. Get major issues out of the way so that if the employer falls short of your financial expectations, you have alternate ways to make up the difference. Try anticipating his moves and discover how far he can go. Have the employer divulge himself first.

If the negotiator only offers \$30,000 and you need \$50,000, don't just give up and walk out. Be creative and secure the other \$20,000 in other ways such as through insurance, a vehicle allowance, a housing or clothing allowance, etc. Retirement and disability insurance are other ways an employer can greatly assist a superintendent. Suggest a percentage of cart and green fees. If a club has 40,000 rounds of golf per year perhaps you can convince the employer to increase the green fees \$.50/round which goes to you. Other possibilities include a bonus to you for each new member, or a bonus if you stay within your budget. I know one superintendent who makes \$10,000 a year from golf ball concessions from his lakes. If the employer refuses to compromise on any of this, then it is time to leave.

Let's say you have a verbal agreement. Negotiations are still not complete. Now protect yourself with the contract. If the employer insists on drawing up the contract, have your attorney check it out before you sign.

A good contract is equally fair to both parties. It should state the nature of the employment (from when to when); I suggest a minimum three year agreement. It should include the responsibilities and duties of the superintendent, compensation, vacation policy, sick days, disability policy, insurance, allowances, seminars and dues, and membership privileges. Also include an indemnification clause where the employer pays all legal fees

"Be creative ... I know one superintendent who makes \$10,000 a year in golf ball concessions from his lakes"

if someone hurts themselves and tries to sue you. There needs to be a termination agreement, but make sure the reasons are valid. Clauses like: "Either party may terminate this agreement without cause 30 days prior to written notice to the other", can turn your three year contract into 30 days. In my contract, my employer can terminate our agreement at any time for any reason, but if he does, he must give me four months severance pay unless I am convicted of a felony or embezzlement. Also, I can leave with a four month written notice or either pay for their search for a replacement. Without it you are destined to lose the contract dispute, simply because legal fees will probably be higher than what you are going after. Pick four arbitrators, two of your choosing and two of your employer's choosing, and try to agree on all four.

(continued page 10)

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(Negotiate continued)

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The "old-time" superintendents have laid vital groundwork for us to better our profession. Through education, communication and research we are taking great strides to continue this advancement. Please do not backslide. We must set minimum standards. Sell yourself and get your worth, not only for yourself and your family, but for superintendents everywhere.

Credit: "Through the Green" May/June 92.

Leaves, Limbs, Needles & Boughs



by Fred Opperman

Well, it has taken me over four years to get around to the most common tree that is planted on the Chicagoland area golf courses. Why has it taken me so long? I have always felt that with the tree being so common, you ought to have other species to choose from and get more diversity into your plantings. Dr. Tom Green in his report on trees on golf courses, listed the Green Ash, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, as the most common tree planted with over 3000 being counted on courses he surveyed.

Green Ash is also heavily planted in the parkways of many towns and cities. It can withstand the grit, salt and the harsh conditions where little care is ever given.

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