

ETHICS (*eth' iks*) *n.pl.* 1. *The principles of honor and morality.* 2. *Accepted rules of conduct.* 3. *The moral principles of an individual.*

"Morals are an acquirement — like music, like a foreign language, like piety, poker, paralysis — no man is born with them." — Mark Twain

That is the literal definition of the word, to clarify its meaning for each of us. The quote may be telling each of us that we must work at achieving and upholding morals, or ethics, such as our code of ethics for the Greater Detroit GCSAA.

On par with the President

Pertaining to that code of ethics, its interpretation and all of its ambiguity, allow me to present three fictitious scenarios that each of us could find ourselves involved in at any time during our careers as golf course superintendents. These three scenarios may or may not involve ethical or moral questions. You be the judge. Ethical questions can be

interpreted and argued by both sides of a conflict until each is blue in the face. In my humble opinion, there are simply too many excuses that can be dreamed up to explain away a question of individual morals or ethics when a much wanted, or much needed, job is available.

So as you read on you will find that I personally only have one thought on the matter of ethics — it is one simple idea. An idea that may enable us to prevent and to solve many of the problems associated with our code of ethics. An idea to put an end to the useless and often harmful rumor mills. An idea to, in the long run, strengthen professional ties amongst us all. I am certain there are many other possible ideas as well. This is just my one simple idea. I urge you to please consider its use. Its potential benefit could someday be realized by each and every one of us.

Scenario #1: Paul Annuia has been an assistant superintendent for three years. A head superintendent position that he feels qualified for is rumored to be available, but has yet to be

publicly advertised as open. Paul decides he would like to apply for the job. Before Paul proceeds any further, what should he do? Answer: Call the present superintendent.

Scenario #2: Harry Roote is a successful and well-known superintendent, employed at his present position for nine years. One day a member of the board of directors at a nearby country club plays golf at Harry's course and is duly impressed with the playing conditions. The member tracks Harry down on the golf course and proceeds to tell him that his club is very disappointed with its present superintendent and that they are letting him go. He further states that he has the ability to hire a replacement and asks Harry if he would like to have the job. Before Harry proceeds any further, what should he do? Answer: Call the present superintendent.

Scenario #3: Dolly Spot is a golf course superintendent who has a friend who owns a golf course across town. The friend just recently purchased the course and doesn't have much, if any, experience with the golf course industry. Since Dolly is a friend and has much experience with golf course management, the owner looks to Dolly for advice. He asks Dolly to visit the golf course, take a tour, and give him any recommendations that she may have on the care and upkeep of the property. Before Dolly proceeds any further, what should she do? Answer: Call the present superintendent.

There you have it. That is my simple idea and my simple solution to 99.9% of all code of ethics dilemmas: Call the present superintendent. In each of the scenarios, a simple phone call could prevent an undesirable

Editor's Note Ethics vs job changes is always a thorny issue in our business where professional courtesy, personality, common sense, honesty and fairness all get tangled up with expediency, callousness and restraint of trade. I came across a simple straight forward attempt at educating others to the issue in Paul DuShane's President's Message in the Fall 1996 issue of Greater Detroit GCSA's newsletter, *The Patch of Green*. It's worth spreading around.

BY PAUL DUSHANE

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We could all do ourselves a favor to be as honorable and moral as we possibly can, whether pursuing job openings or offering a helping hand

situation from ever occurring. In scenario #1 and #2, Paul Annu and Harry Roote should call the present superintendent to:

1. Confirm that the position is open.
 2. Offer congratulations if the superintendent is leaving on his own accord, or condolences if the superintendent was let go.
 3. Question the superintendent on particulars about the position and the golf course.
 4. Ask for any advice or helpful tips.
- If unable to reach the present superintendent for some reason, such

as if he or she has already left the position, try phoning the individual at home if at all possible. Most superintendents will be happy to offer any information they can about a job.

Communication between professionals can prevent many undesirable situations and uncomfortable or untoward feelings from spoiling a potentially beneficial relationship. The worst thing that could happen would be for the individual to say "no." At least in your mind you will know you tried to communicate.

To conclude this statement about ethics and morality, please ponder the following quote and remember its meaning as you deal with your fellow golf course superintendents on a professional level: "I would rather be the man who bought the Brooklyn Bridge than the man who sold it." — Will Rogers

We could all do ourselves a favor to be as honorable and moral as we possibly can, whether pursuing job openings or offering a helping hand.

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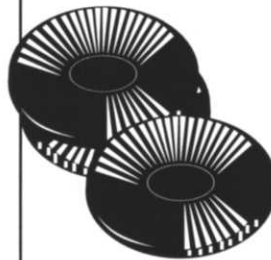


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