

We Don't Say 'Thank You' Often Enough

By Don Benham

I received an E-mail the other day about thanking people with an E-mail. It was suggested I send a personal note to individuals acknowledging something about them I like. You know the kind of E-mail I mean. The touchy-feely ones suggesting I send the message to ten people. I never do even though most of them are just harmless pass-along-the-story type of mail.

For some reason several days after I had deleted the E-mail it was still on my mind.

Benham's Beat



My wife and I had dinner last evening with several old friends, "old" meaning I have known them for more than years.

One couple volunteers at Sarasota Memorial Hospital three days a week and has been doing this for 10 years. Thinking of the E-mail, I thanked them for contributing their time for a common good. It made me feel good for thanking them even though I have never been a patient in that hospital.

We all know somebody in our business who contributes personal time to help golf. He or she might be your local chapter secretary or treasurer or one of the other board members who spends a lot of time on chapter business. They might be in charge of securing speakers for the monthly meetings, keeping the check-book balances, producing a newsletter, or maintaining a Web site.

I was at the Suncoast Chapter meeting for the annual election at Sara Bay Country Club. There were several reports given of Chapter interest just as at every other chapter meeting going on across the state. I have been attending chapter meetings for 30 years with people volunteering their time for the benefit of the whole group. I have thanked a lot of people over those years but I also have taken for granted and not thanked many others.

At this Suncoast meeting one of the speakers was from Sarasota County and he brought along copies of the working draft of a new regulation entitled "Sarasota County Golf Course Design and Performance Standards." My first thought was that I had better send a copy of this to Joel Jackson.

Joel had sent out a memo March 22 suggesting - and I quote - "We can't emphasize

enough how beneficial it can be for your chapter to host a monthly meeting where you invite local legislators to attend and give you, the voters in their district, a legislative update. Such meetings provide you with the opportunity to discuss the regulatory issues facing golf in your district."

It should not be a gripe session but it can be an educational exchange, beneficial to both parties. This working draft turns over a lot of control and reporting to the county. I know it is being written in a positive manner but it is very far-reaching in taking control of golf courses in the county.

I asked the question, "What prompted the writing of this ordinance?" I was told that when new golf courses were being built, people were concerned about safety and possible chemical runoff into water supplies. This ordinance has a detailed section on "Existing Golf Courses."

This is exactly what Joel has been warning us about. Thank you, Joel Jackson, for all of the extra time you spend in meetings and collecting information for us. You go far beyond your job. It's time I said this thank you to you, the same as I did to the couple volunteering at the hospital. I have a lot more thank-yours to be said and I am going to make sure that I say them in the future.

"Editor's Note: You're welcome, Don, and thanks for the "atta-boy," but give credit to the Suncoast GCSA and especially the Suncoast Owners Association. Thanks to their involvement in the process it looks like the stringent "Existing Course" section may be removed after both groups had presented real world facts to the County. This is a good example of why owners need to be more united and involved in Florida's golf industry."

USGA Update BMPs Suggested for Golf Course Water Coolers

by David L. Wienecke

Golf course water coolers have been in the news after an Arizona golf course was found liable for contaminated drinking water resulting in a death. The following points outline some best management practices aimed at reducing potential potable drinking water contamination on the golf course. Additional information is available at the Cactus and Pine Golf Course Superintendent's Association Web site at www.cactusandpine.com.

Water and Ice:

Arizona golf courses now have padlocked containers to secure water quality in any coolers placed on the golf course. To avoid the potential for contamination, ice also should be in a locked container unless it is a dispenser-type ice machine. Water and ice in the cooler must be from a public-water distribution system or approved water supply that is tested to ensure conformity with applicable regulations. Check with your county or state health department to verify that your water source meets applicable regulations for potable water.

Water Dispensers:

If using a cooler, it should be made from food-grade materials and be easily cleaned. The cooler spigot should be a gravity-flow design to minimize contamination.

The Maricopa County Environmental Services Department recommends cleaning water cooler dispensers every 24 hours.

Recommended cleaning procedures include washing with a detergent, rinsing with clean potable water, followed by an approved sanitizer such as chlorine bleach immersed for at least one minute.

Contact your health department for recommended bleach dilution rates for sanitizing.

The sink used for cleaning ideally must be large enough to allow complete immersion of the cooler. If this is not possible, a cleaning and sanitizing in-place procedure has been approved by on-site inspectors.

The dispenser nozzle also must be cleaned prior to filling containers.

Cleaning procedure recommendations also include air drying of the container. Containers should never be in contact with the floor.

Arizona golf courses are being inspected by the environmental services or health departments to ensure proper cleaning and sanitizing is being done for water cooler dispensers.

Some Arizona golf courses have chosen to stop using water coolers and have installed refrigerated drinking fountains equipped with single-service paper cups. If this is done, make certain a licensed plumber installs the machine to ensure compliance with all appropriate plumbing codes. Compliance with all applicable vending machine regulations also is required. Machines installed must be National Sanitation Foundation Underwriters Laboratory and National Automatic Merchandising Association approved. These approvals (i.e. "NAMA Listed" service mark) are found in the upper left hand corner on the front of the machine. In addition, machines in compliance with these standards will have a letter of compliance listing the manufacture, model, and date of certification that the vendor should be able to show the purchaser.

The machine must be protected from contact with irrigation system sprinkler water.

The golf course is required to sample the water dispensed from this machine at least once every 12 months to detect coliform bacteria.

An approved laboratory is required to do this analysis. Records of these testing results must be kept for a minimum of 2 years.

Another option being used in lieu of the standard ice-filled coolers is bottled water. If this option is used, a sign with the same language found on the bottled water label is recommended to warn against drinking from bottles where the safety seal has been broken. If ice is provided it should be in a locked container to avoid potential contamination.

Dispenser Filling:

- The water cooler must be filled in a room with a ceiling and floors that are smooth, dry, and easily cleanable. (The golf course restaurant kitchen makes a great location for dispenser filling and cleaning.)
- The water cooler should not be placed on the floor when filling.
- The filling area must be free of insects, chemicals, or other potential contaminants of the water or dispenser.
- Hoses used to fill containers should be for potable water use only. Garden hoses are not acceptable for filling these containers.
- Plumbing codes, including cross connection protections, should be maintained at all times.
- Air gaps provide excellent cross connection protection during filling and cleaning.
- Ice used for the cooler should never come in contact with humans.
- Disposable food-grade gloves should be used by the person filling the cooler.
- Use a food-grade ice scoop for filling containers.
- The water used to make the ice must meet all applicable health requirements for potable water.
- The ice-making machine also should meet all applicable health requirements for human consumption.
- Water should not be stored in coolers overnight.
- Coolers should be filled each day with fresh water in clean, dry containers.
- Containers should have a food-grade, approved lid that allows a complete seal following filling.

Dispenser Location:

- Dispensers should be a minimum of three feet off the ground in a locked container. Dispensers should never be in contact with irrigation or other non-potable water. Dispensers should be removed each evening if the golf course will be irrigated with reclaimed or effluent water.
- Single-service cups must be provided and protected at the dispenser.

Personal Hygiene:

- Employees must wash their hands prior to filling containers.
- Persons involved in handling, filling, and cleaning these water dispensers should follow the health department food handler protocol used in restaurants.
- While these details may be imposing, the result of not protecting yourself could be sickness of persons drinking contaminated water.

GCSAA Update

GCSAA Chapter Executives Meet in Lawrence

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

Every two years GCSAA-affiliated chapter executives and leading chapter officers hold a two-day conference to network and discuss ways GCSAA can better serve the chapters and how individual chapters can operate more effectively. This year Marie Roberts, FGCSA association manager, Samantha Kriesch, Calusa GCSA executive secretary and Kyle Sweet, EGCSA vice president attended from Florida. There were 48 representatives from the 103 affiliated GCSAA chapters. We met April 29-30. First-time attendees could attend an optional orientation session on the afternoon of the 28th.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the conference were to:

1. Identify resources to help us more effectively manage our affiliated chapters.
2. Establish and/or strengthen professional relationships with other affiliated chapter executives and volunteers through networking and sharing ideas, challenges and innovative solutions.
3. Participate in small group discussions on a variety of topics to help our chapters grow in the scope and quality of services and programs it delivers to members.
4. Discuss today's issues and tomorrow's challenges in meeting the ever-changing needs of golf course superintendents.
5. Return home with a renewed energy and perspective on how to best serve our chapter's members.

The first morning we were updated on all the GCSAA departments and services available to members, including Career Development, Chapter Services, Conference Events and Meeting Planning, Education, Corporate Marketing & Sales, The Environmental Institute for Golf, Government Relations, Human Resources, Membership, Information Technology (Web site improvements and online services), Publications, and Research.

After the morning break we broke into small groups and tackled topics like chapter fundraising activities, alternative revenue sources besides dues, soliciting chapter event sponsorships, and chapter foundations.

In the afternoon Open-discussion session, the topics were ways to enhance the government relations program, how to grow the membership, chapter media/public relations programs, and legal issues including discussions on ethics-violation incidents, bylaws compliance, and chapter liability insurance.

Steve Mona also updated the group

2003 Plants of the Year Part 3

In an ongoing effort to promote the production, sale and use of superior Florida-grown plants, the Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association has announced 2003 selections of the Florida Plants of the Year. This program was launched to promote under-utilized, but proven Florida plant material. These proven ornamentals are selected on an annual basis by a group of growers, horticulturists, retailers, landscape professionals and University of Florida faculty.

For a plant to be considered a Plant of the Year, set criteria must be met. Selected plants have good pest resistance, require reasonable care and are fairly easy to propagate and grow. The award-winning plants must also exhibit some superior quality, improved performance or unique characteristic that set them apart from others in their respective classes. Here are two more 2003 selections for your consideration:

Stokes' Aster

Botanical Name: *Stokesia laevis*

Hardiness: Zones 6-9



Stephen Pategas-Hortus Oasis

Mature Height and Spread:

Foliage 8-12 in. tall x 14-18 in. wide. Flower stalk may reach 16-24 ft. tall

Classification: Herbaceous perennial

Landscape Use: Mixed border plantings or massed near front of perennial beds in full sun or light shade. A butterfly attractor.

Characteristics: Originally a native plant, but now offered in selected forms, it tolerates a wide range of soil conditions throughout the state. This perennial defoliates in extreme cold, but is evergreen in temperatures above 24 degrees. Flowers are 2-4 in. in diameter, ranging in color from deep blue to lavender to white.

Yesterday-today-and-tomorrow

Botanical Name: *Brunfelsia grandiflora*

Hardiness: Zones 8-10

Mature Height and Spread:

5-8 ft. tall and wide

Classification:

Flowering shrub

Landscape Use:

Specimen plant or color accent

Characteristics:

One of several species all bearing masses of large flat flowers that open purplish-blue and fade to light blue then white. All three colors are noticeable on the plant at the same time. This evergreen shrub has somewhat glossy leaves and continual summer flowering.



Yesterday-today-and-tomorrow. Photo: Derek Burch



Samantha Kriesch, Calusa GCSA executive secretary, and Kyle Sweet, Everglades GCSA vice president, pose next to the Old Tom statue at the GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence, KS. Photo by Joel Jackson.

on the state of the association. He also shared a list of "Ten Truisms" for association staffers to keep in mind. These tips have been gleaned from his years of association service, and were a good reminders to help staff members to keep the proper perspective when dealing with changing boards.

Accounting, financial management and tax issues were also covered in the afternoon, with emphasis on taxable, unrelated business income and how lobbying (since we are getting more pro-active) affects our non- and not-for-profit tax status.

A chapter-executives survey that covered all facets of working conditions, salaries and benefits much like the superintendent and course-maintenance surveys we conduct biannually. As you might expect, the responses were all over the map from independent, part-time outside contract situations to paid staff like Marie and me, to executive directors with offices and staffs.

The update on the PDI implementation was of much interest, since these are the folks who will be doing a large share of the record keeping and reporting. And I imagine they will also get heavily involved in making sure monthly-meeting education programs are submitted for GCSAA approval for Class A education points.

Another topic was how to improve working relationships with state golf associations. This is a relatively untapped sleeping giant of public opinion and research funding. The time is rapidly approaching when golf course superintendent associations will be holding regular state and regional golf "summits" with state golf associations (the players); club managers association, golf course owners association and turfgrass associations to help defend and promote the business and game of golf.

Superintendents See Internet As Important: Survey

Most superintendents read news and obtain product and technical information online; see Internet impact as moderate to high

A recent survey by Bayer Environmental Science of superintendents at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Conference and Show in Atlanta, indicated that more than 90 percent of respondents believe the Internet and related online services have a moderate to high impact

on the golf course industry. However, most use the Internet to read news and obtain product and technical information, not yet to purchase products, the survey indicated.

Only one individual claimed to "never" use the Internet. The rest of those surveyed indicated they use the Internet mainly to:

- Research product/technical information (62%)
- Read news (37%)
- Review job openings (31%)
- Make purchases, general and work-related (21%)
- Get event updates (21%)
- Just curious (17%)
- Correspond through forums (3%)
- Don't use it (1%)

Online Purchasing

Though only 36 percent of respondents purchase work-related products online (and those purchases total an average of 10 percent of monthly purchases), 71 percent said they would purchase products online in the future. They cite close relationships with local distributors/salespeople and unfamiliarity with Internet purchasing as why they haven't yet purchased online. The remaining 29 percent indicated they would not purchase online in the future or that they live outside the country or have other reasons why they cannot process online payments.

When asked what online functions they would like to use but are not available to them or not invented yet, answers ranged from golf-specific weather information to thorough MSDS/chemical information to forums or chat rooms about golf course management.

The survey was conducted at the GCSAA Internet Cafe on the show floor. One hundred superintendents were surveyed. The average age of respondents was 37, with 92 percent working within the continental U.S., and eight percent working overseas.



Computers have graduated from irrigation controller to information source.