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'I also told the PSC about financial and moral responsibility for the ultimate disposal of this wastewater.'

back into the ground, the more he can take out to expand his customer base.

I also told the PSC about financial and moral responsibility for the ultimate disposal of this wastewater. It truly is a clear-cut issue if you examine the facts. The only ones muddying up the waters are the "experts." It seems ironic that the individuals who market themselves as "experts" are the ones who are most afraid of the PSC oversight proposal.

This issue of PSC oversight has not been decided on yet. They will be gathering more information over the next ten months before the legal staff makes a recommendation to the PSC commissioners and the governor's office. After that, there will be a tough battle in the legislature to enact it into law. I feel that this is our best hope to get a statewide rate program which can apply to everyone. The cost-free program, such as the one in Orange County, is the one I press for every time I have the opportunity to speak

to any agency. But more needs to be done.

On the local scene, you need to inform your club president, greens chairman and members. You need to educate them on the high-handed practices of the utilities. You need to reach out to your water management districts and bring in a staffer who knows what is going on and let him speak to your members. Most of all, you should hold off on signing any contract with a utility unless there is no charge or the fee is less than five cents per thousand gallons and it is long-term with automatic renewal clauses. It is very important that members realize they are not the only ones they will affect if they sign a contract.

The utility will use it as proof that not only can we afford to pay but are most agreeable to paying. They must realize there are others not quite so fortunate as they may be when it comes to finances

and are unable to pay what they might be willing to pay.

It has been a long struggle. From August of 1990 where we received notices of 80% reductions in our water use permits to force us to wastewater to today. Today we have gotten our message to all the state agencies and even the governor's office. We have started them thinking about our side of the story. We have won over some valuable allies but have still more to convert.

We have gotten a reprieve on the 80% reduction rule. We have bought ourselves some time. Time which we should not waste. Time where our efforts in this area should be increased. Time where the educating of our members is as important as educating the PSC and DER.

Let's not waste it, if we do we will only have ourselves to blame for the untimely demise of the future of golf in our great state.

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A failure to communicate!

For trivia buffs, those fateful words in the title of this column were uttered by the sheriff in the Paul Newman movie, *Cool Hand Luke*. They might as well have been spoken by a golf course superintendent in the course of any given day, judging by recent events.

My esteemed colleagues, Mark Jarrell and Tom Benefield, have already commented thoroughly in *The Green Sheet* on the GCSAA's failure to communicate accurately on member sentiments surrounding the soundly-defeated bylaws changes. There are other after-the-fact communications coming out of headquarters that have many members concerned about how things are being run. We are hoping for better information sharing from the new Board.

But my point is the failure to communicate within our own golf operations! We have all been victims of the surprise shotgun tournament that gets sprung on us at the last minute. What in the world is going on in the clubhouse anyhow? Besides telling the pro shop staff and the food and beverage department, what other department or person might need to know about an 8 a.m., 144-man, shotgun start tournament on a Monday morning? Hmmm?

You know Mondays: they're like Wednesdays, and Fridays when the golf course maintenance staff (only for the last millennium) sets cups, mows greens, tees, collars, and fairways plus any other bunker raking and rough mowing routine. And Tuesdays and Thursdays when we park the tee and collar mowers to flymow bunkers or apply some fertilizer or work on a project. These schedules aren't set in concrete. We can accommodate any special function. It is our job! We just need to know about it!

It is also our job to prepare and present the best playing conditions possible. Since golf courses are operated on an economic calendar instead of an agronomic calendar, we need to know what days or even half-days that we can't have the golf course for normal operations. We do our best to squeeze the agronomy in between the first tee times at sunrise, twilight play, Men's Days, Ladies' Days, group functions, and any other special event where no one wants the maintenance staff to "be in the way"!

This communication problem isn't just a Central Florida phenomenon. I just read the Wisconsin GCSA newsletter, *The Grass Roots*, wherein a group of superintendents detail a list of their communication horror stories: surprise shotgun starts, "nite lite" golf outings that get drenched by

the night-time irrigation, a special group function that finds the aerifier, not a mower, preparing the greens, and so on! All examples of the inexcusable failure of the tournament coordinator, club manager, convention sales staff, golf professional, starter's office, etc. to communicate with those who need to know!

Why do these communication failures continue week after week, month after month, year after year? The superintendents in Wisconsin had several fuzzy organizational reasons, but Monroe Miller hit the nail on the head when he said, "somehow we scramble around and make things right." There it is! We jump through the hoop and perform the tricks that cover up the lack of attention to detail by others. That kind of performance would get a superintendent called on the carpet or fired if he persistently ignored communicating with the clubhouse!

Wouldn't it be interesting to hear the comments from the golfers after a very special event was played on unmowed or freshly aerified greens with no attempt to correct somebody else's mistake. Professional pride and a strong survival instinct prevents most of us from letting some of these potential disasters from unfolding. Because, in some twisted way, we feel it will be construed as being our fault if the course isn't ready. Even, if we only had last-minute notice of an event! It may be a good defensive tactic for the superintendent to call every day to find out what's on the schedule, or if the published schedule has changed. But, trust me, even that is not foolproof!

Doesn't it just seem logical, responsible, and professional that the person, who has first-hand knowledge of information that will affect how the club serves its members or guests, should be the person to insure that communications reach all those who need to know. Of course, I'm being selfish here to include the superintendent as one of those who needs to know.

Hasn't it occurred to everyone associated with golf that it is the condition of the course that makes or breaks an event and generates repeat business or memberships? With all the answering machines, fax machines, and voice mail features available there just isn't any excuse for springing a surprise on the staff anymore.

Now that I have practically accused all of the tournament sales people, golf pros, and club managers of dereliction of duty and malfeasance in office, let me say, I know you are really human just like me so, put down your sticks and stones and just pick up the cotton-picking phone!

Green Side Up



Joel D. Jackson, CGCS

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