

Avenues of communication continue to improve for supers

By TERRY BUCHEN

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — One of the greatest advantages golf course superintendents have over others in our business is how we communicate with each other. Whether by telephone, in person, at a chapter monthly meeting or during the national conference, we are well versed in getting a second opinion, comparing notes or new advice.

Just a simple and friendly talk about general management practices and ideas at our respective courses is real productive, rewarding and making us feel good about what we are doing.

We now have another avenue that is becoming very successful which should make us proud: The GCSAA website (www.gcsaa.org/members/memcom.html) is making great strides to help and serve its members and the GCSAA discussion forums are really catching on.

The foundation and groundwork for the chat rooms was laid out years ago by the implementation of the TurfByte Bulletin Board, by Dwayne Patton and Jon Scott. TurfByte had great insight and was way ahead of its time. Superintendents who had computers in those days communicated by simply asking for an answer to a technical question, and most of the subscribers would give an answer, which showed the community spirit that superintendents have with sharing information and how unique we are in the world of golf.

The three GCSAA discussion forums are Talking Turf, which is for finding answers or sharing ideas about all aspects of golf course management; Shop Talk, which is for selling, or comparing, or to gather information from other superintendents on maintenance equipment; and Talking It Over, for superintendents to share our thoughts and ideas on just about everything not covered in the other two forums.

These three discussion forums are really doing great and they get better each and every month.

The only disappointment is that many of the participants feel that more superintendents should get involved, instead of just browsing, by posting provocative questions or responding directly by posting an answer or food for thought for our fellow supers.

More superintendents ought to go that one step further and

participate in the way we have on the TurfByte Bulletin Board.

The GCSAA's International Golf Course Conference and Show is a great time to renew old acquaintances with peers and to network to make new friends in the process. This national conference is the

biggest and best on the planet. It is interesting to note that even with all of the great number of seminars, educational talks, the big trade show and quite simply the magnitude of the conference that the most subtle learning experience is by the simple art of talking with our fellow golf course superintendents. Most

superintendent friends say that the best way to learn is to have a friendly and lively discussion with our peers about any subject, which is a real 'feel good' situation to be in. Like on the telephone, visiting in person is a no better learning experience, which are the fundamentals about what the national

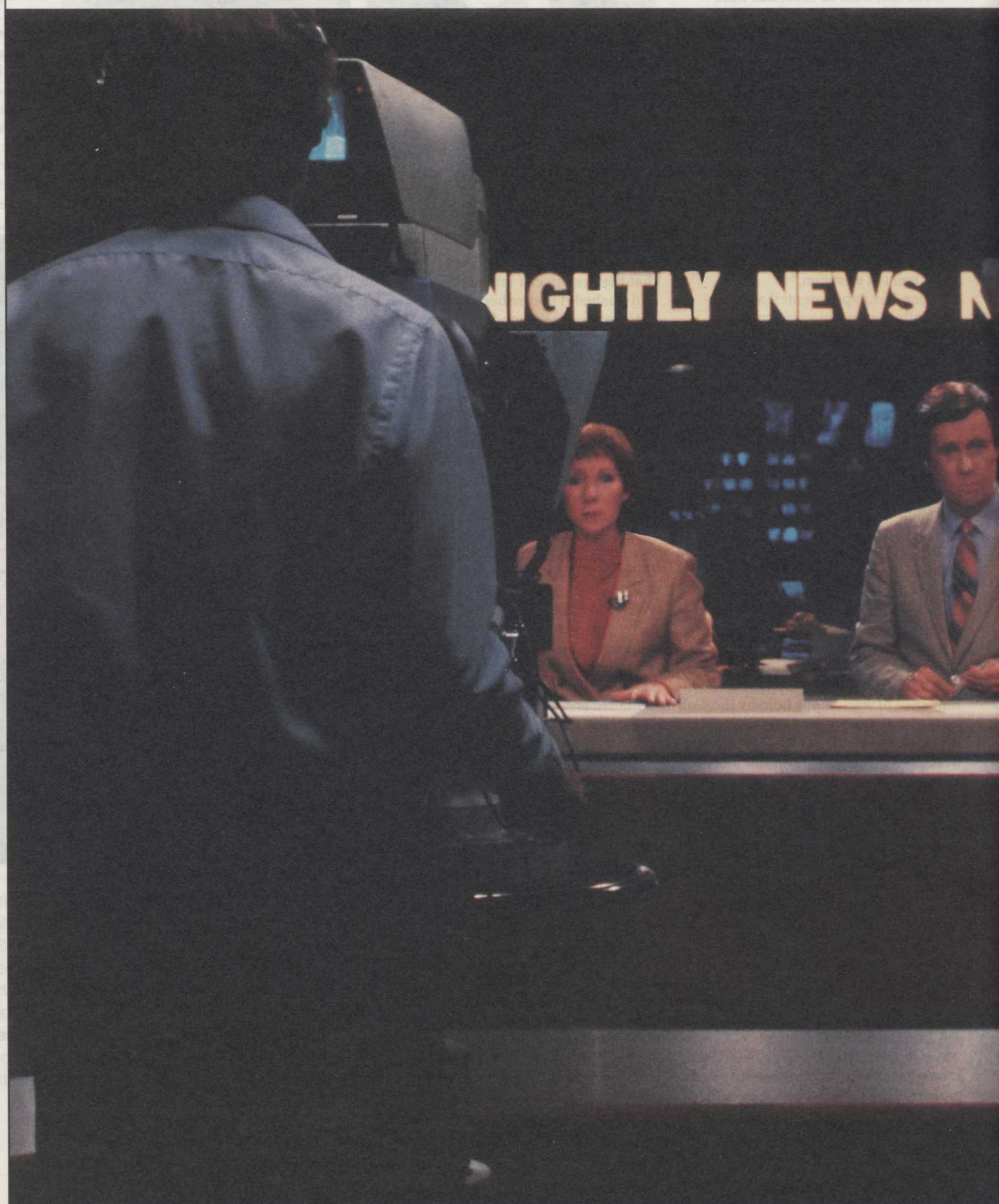
conference is all about.

Now, if we can continue on with this time honored tradition by making better use of the three GCSAA discussion forums we will all be better for it.

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We'll keep the pesticide industry from



GCSAA survey reveals supers' influence on decision-making, budget

LAWRENCE, Kan. — A recently completed Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) survey indicated members at all types of golf facilities are heavily involved in administrative and financial decisions that they execute themselves or with management. In measuring decision-making

responsibilities, respondents were asked to rank their influence in numerous areas on a scale of 1 (having no impact at all) to 5 (being the decision-maker).

Superintendents had the greatest influence in the areas of chemical application (94.4 percent listed No. 5), mowing and maintenance schedules (93.7 percent listed No.

5) and chemical product purchase decisions (96.0 percent listed No. 4 or No. 5).

The survey also revealed superintendents are influential in expenditures for capital equipment (93.3 percent listed No. 3 through No. 5) and equipment (97.4 percent listed No. 3 through No. 5). In terms of golf

car purchases, 46.9 percent are influential in categories No. 3 through 5.

Respondents also provided information as to the latest changes in the industry that have affected job performance. Results were divided by operating budget, with the lower end being less than \$250,000 annually

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and the upper end at more than \$700,000 annually. Regardless of budget level, one of the most frequent responses concerned providing conditions to meet the higher expectations of golfers while keeping within budgetary limits.

Associated with that, facilities at all levels expressed a concern of finding and maintaining qualified labor to serve on golf course maintenance crews. A strong economy and non-traditional work schedule directly affect the available labor pool.

Superintendents were virtually unanimous across the board in the positive impact alternative spikes have had in their work. Keeping abreast of the latest environmental issues was also a common response of all members.

The issue of accommodating disabled golfers centered on turf repair and capital improvements. Respondents indicated that 75.4 percent had no turf repair expenses, while 7.5 percent indicated expenses were less than 10 percent of operating and maintenance budgets (17.1 percent were unsure).

As for capital improvements, 65.7 percent indicated there was no cost, while 14.3 percent indicated the cost was less than 10 percent of the capital budget (19 percent were unsure).

Savvy Super

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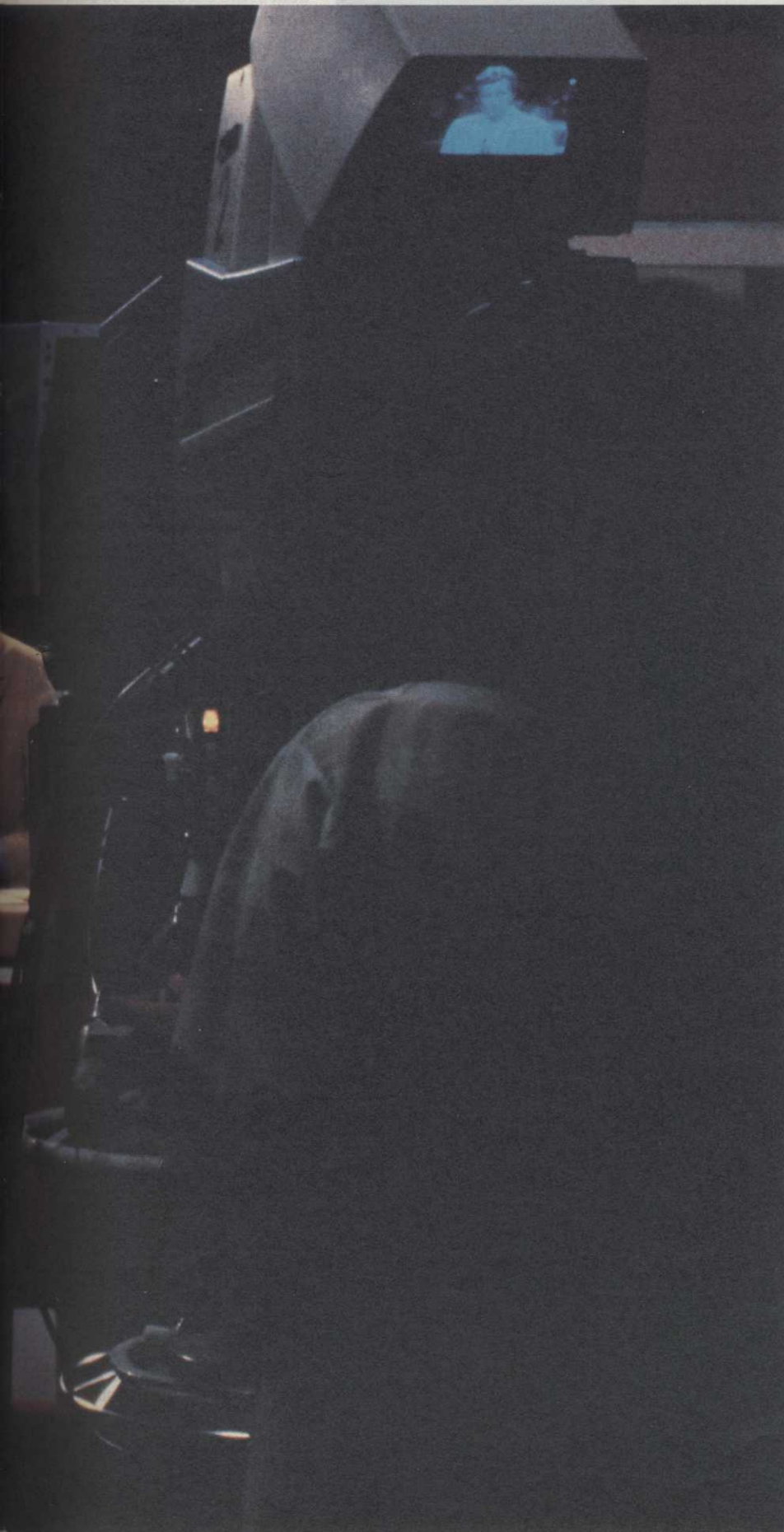
I cannot say enough about the *Leader Board* official publication from the GCSAA, which is published bi-monthly, providing information exclusively for golf course decision-makers.

The *Leader Board* always was a good publication and it has gotten even better since it became available by subscription.

It is now available, in recent years, as part of our GCSAA member package. Kim Heck is doing an excellent job of editing this great newsletter, which is very informative, for all of us to have at our disposal, in our files, to provide to course officials, with answers anytime one of the many provocative subject matters ever comes-up.

My only regret is that this newsletter does not come out monthly, only every other month, as it is that worthwhile.

becoming a victim of air pollution.



Ahh, television news in the 90s.

Tabloid journalism has sneaked its way onto the airwaves. And the pursuit of facts seems to have been replaced by the pursuit of ratings.

So the specialty pesticide industry needs a media watchdog that not only watches. But that also takes action.

Fortunately, we have one.

RISE. Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment.

RISE is a coalition of manufacturers, formulators and distributors from all areas of the specialty pesticide business.

In addition to promoting environmental stewardship, RISE makes sure the media doesn't report misinformation as fact.

We also hold editorial meetings with media decision-makers. And respond to negative articles or broadcasts that are incorrect. We've been very successful so far. Not surprising considering what our most powerful weapon is.

The truth.

Of course, there's still a lot more work to do. But rest assured, RISE is up to the task.

Because we know if we eliminate air pollution, the pesticide industry can breathe a lot easier.



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