

a teacher's wisdom

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one-on-one guidance he gets from Phillips is detailed and professional.

"From day one, he's been very thorough in describing proper agronomic practices," Bottorff says.

For instance, the crew has learned proper irrigation repairs, the best watering strategy, spraying techniques and what to look for regarding disease.

"While I don't have the education, what I learn daily from him is as valuable as the education," Bottorff says.

Heading to class

Assistants also can develop their skills by taking advantage of learning opportunities. Kuhns always encourages his staff to attend Golf Course Superintendents Association of America seminars and the Golf Industry Show. The classes and talks from experts and veterans can be great tools for solving tricky problems on a course.

"If you can't find a solution in any of those, then you've missed the big picture," Kuhns says.

Much of the GCSAA training available is geared toward younger members, says Shari Koehler, director of education. Live presentations that are webcast or supplied on-demand to a computer help assistants

learn about subjects when they need it. Koehler gets positive feedback on technical material such as "Using Excel to Enhance Your Operation" and "Ideal Green Speeds for Your Golf Course."

"They're timely, relevant and affordable, so it's really a good fit for assistant superintendents," she says.

Koehler also encourages assistants to pursue softer skills.

"We really feel business communications and leadership skills training are crucial to being successful," she says, noting available seminars such as "Developing Financial Savvy in the Golf Business" and "Communications Skills for a Successful Career."

Considering everything, one fact remains: Assistants are steering their own careers with countless possibilities in front of them. All the advice and training won't mean much if they aren't working hard and striving for success.

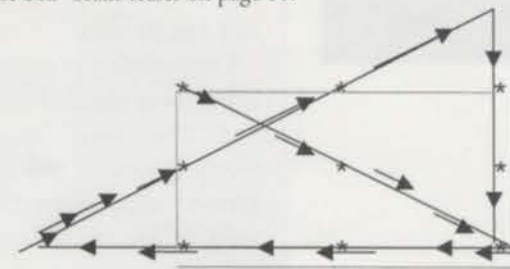
"They set their destiny," Kuhns says. "They make their careers." GCN

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This is the solution to the "Think outside the box" brain-teaser on page 10.



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The Publisher of Golf Course News is Kevin Gilbride, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland Ohio 44113-3399.

The Editor is John Walsh, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland Ohio 44113-3399.

The owner is Richard J.W. Foster, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland Ohio 44113-3399.

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