

## THE WHITEBOARD

I've visited waaaay too many maintenance facilities over a quarter-century in this crazy business and it seems like every one of them falls into four basic categories.

Some are called "barns" because they are...er...barns. Sure, most of these rustic structures are located at modestly-budgeted facilities where it's the best they can afford. But it's not unusual to find a barn at a fancy newer daily fee where the superintendent will sheepishly explain that the barn was supposed to be temporary and he has the plans all drawn up for a great shop but the owner ran out of dough thanks to endless construction change orders or crappy housing sales. He will then insist on showing you the plans in detail even though both of you know full well the fancy new facility will never get built.

Others are your basic 40-year-old Morton buildings with dead equipment scattered around, an infinite number of broken pallets stacked up out back and five-gallon seed buckets being used as chairs around the lunch table. The incessant buzzing noise coming from the ancient florescent lights overhead has driven good men crazy. And there's usually one bay door that doesn't quite close right since some summer-help kid smashed a Cushman into it after he lied about being able to drive a stick shift.

The majority of maintenance facilities are probably like yours: cramped but well-organized places that are busy, noisy and constantly exuding that wonderful aromatic blend of urea, exhaust and backlapping compound. There's a course dog or two wandering around, messy piles of topdressing sand and pea gravel around the side, and at least one rusty 7-gang that's become yard art. Oh, and there's almost always a basketball goal nailed up to a utility pole in the parking lot...but it never has a net.

Finally, there are those fabulous few maintenance structures that are truly spectacular, multi-million-dollar complexes – turf Taj Mahals, as it were – with floors so clean you could eat off them and tool racks that would make a NASCAR crew chief drool. These gleaming edifices are often called the "Course

Care Center" or the "Department of Agronomy & Environmental Management" or – as members at the club refer to it – "The Really, Really Fancy Barn."

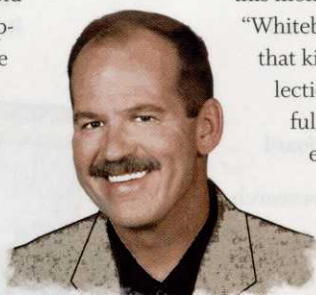
Yet, whether it's a leaky lean-to or a brand-spanking-new "Holistic Horticultural Health Headquarters," all facilities have one thing in common: The Whiteboard.

You know what I'm talking about – the ubiquitous dry-erase board that is information central for announcements, the day's assignments, warnings to not mow down Mrs. McGillicuddy's rose bushes again, etc. Aside from radios, whiteboards are the centerpiece of communications within nearly every maintenance team.

That's why we thought it made sense to have a whiteboard of our own. So, beginning this month, you'll find GCI's new "Whiteboard" section (p. 12-13) that kicks each issue off with a collection of strange and wonderful things. We'll have short, exclusive feature items, summaries of news you may have missed on our Web site, weird pictures, ear-catching quotes and other items of interest from around the golf course business. We hope you find it as useful and informative as your whiteboard at work.

You may also notice that we've separated our world-class collection of columnists. No, they were not cheating off each other in class or passing notes – we just wanted to spread their yummy goodness throughout the magazine and, we believe, give them the individual attention they deserve. Tim Moraghan is now hitting leadoff (page 18) and the rest of the batting order comes to the plate in between our fantastic feature stories. Since I do not work and play well with others, my column remains isolated on the last page.

So, enjoy the new and improved GCI, and for god's sakes put a net up on that basketball hoop. **GCI**



**Pat Jones**

Editorial director and publisher

*Pat Jones*

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