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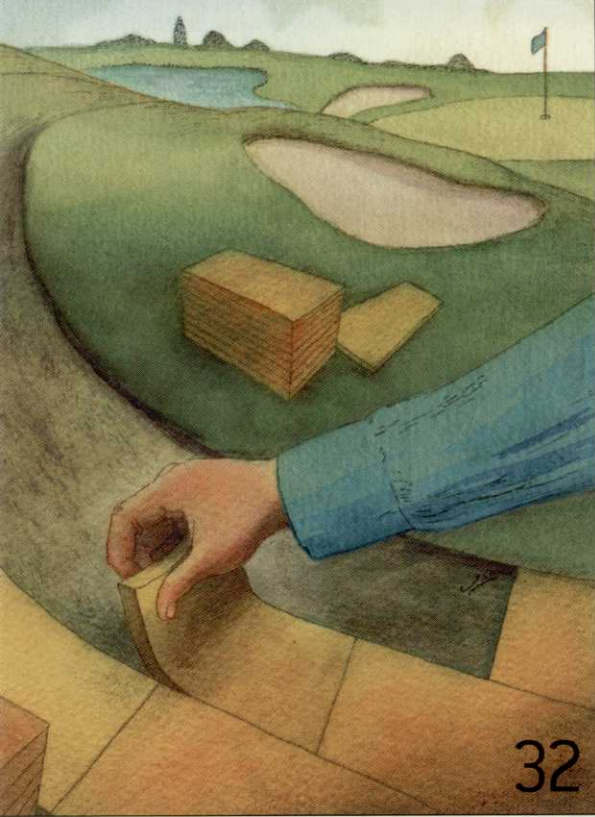
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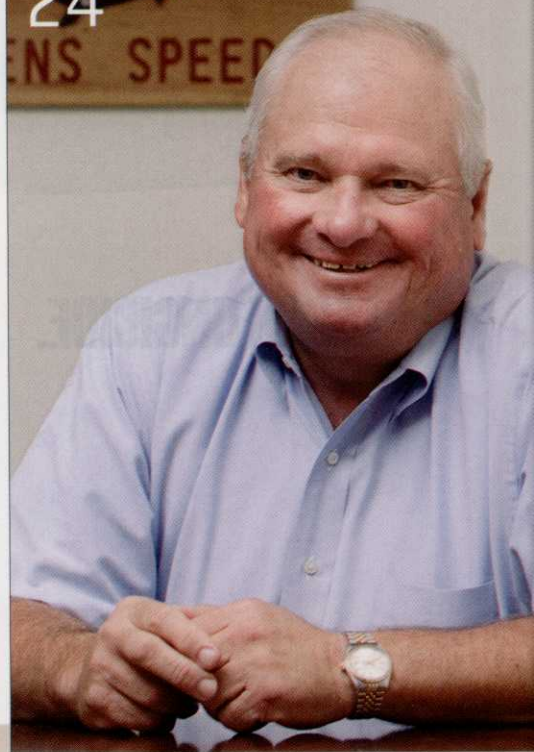
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GOLF

Did You Know?

Nearly 100 percent of golf course greens, tees and fairways are irrigated. Approximately 64 percent of turfgrass in the rough and 74 percent of turfgrass used for the driving range/practice areas are irrigated.

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Items you can find online and in our weekly e-newsletter.

AVOIDING BURNOUT

Superintendents' long hours can take a toll on home lives. At Greenville (N.C.) Country Club, superintendent Chris Parham devised a plan so he and his assistant only work every third weekend. Read about their set-up in the June Online Extras section at golfcourseindustry.com.

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EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course Industry reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those professionals responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset.



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THIS TOO SHALL PASS

"This too shall pass." This phrase has guided me through some tough times. When the chips were down, when obstacles seemed insurmountable and when situations seemed at their most dire, I repeated these four words to myself and they would encourage me to hang in there a little longer. Things will get better.

And they did.

To be honest, I don't remember where I heard it first. In researching the phrase's origins, one of the stories I liked the most was that it was inscribed on King Solomon's ring to remind him that the present – whether positive or negative – was a fleeting thing. It's also one of the fundamental principles in a complex adaptive system, a theory often used to describe how ant colonies and the stock market work. The world is in a state of flux, always changing and constantly reacting to fit the environment around us.

This spring I talked with a number of golf course superintendents about how they were managing through the inevitable budget cuts at their courses.

To no surprise, most superintendents are dealing with the issue of doing more with less – substantially less in some cases. For some, it meant heading into the season with fewer people on staff, while others were forced to eliminate hours, even a day, out of their work week to meet their new budgets. Nearly all, though, were expected to manage through this financial hurdle and present a golf course Shangri-La to members.

I was curious to know how they were getting through this. Many superintendents told me they were managing the best they could, reinforcing to their staffs that, while their hours may be fewer this season, at least they still had hours to work.

I firmly believe superintendents who have the skills to adapt and the fortitude to persevere will make it through this economic downturn as better, stronger managers with more cohesive crews.

Take, for example, Scott Cybulski, CGCS, who is the superintendent at the private Falmouth Country Club in Falmouth, Maine. Cybulski, like many superintendents, told

me membership at his club was down and his budget went right along with it.

Cybulski's particular economic challenges have forced him to approach his job with a new mind-set, one that matches up the strengths of his existing staff to the jobs that need to get done. It also is requiring him to foster more of a team mentality with his crew.

"I'm going to need for them to work without any direct supervision because there's no way I'm going to have the time to watch over them," Cybulski says. "It'll be a good test to see how efficient I can be as a manager, and it's going to be a good test of how my people can work together."

Thomas Wright, superintendent of parks and grounds at Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, N.Y., says while budget cuts are cumbersome, they're forcing managers to realize that they can no longer throw money and resources at problems. "In a crazy sort of way, I see this revitalizing us," he says. "If there's an issue, we must find a way to troubleshoot it with the skills, talents and resources we already have on hand and retask our people to do the work."

It strikes me, though, that while the economy will rebound, it will take longer for superintendents to feel any financial relief.

Superintendents may become victims of their own success. They've proven to be highly capable managers who can do more with less and uphold the ideals members and players have come to expect at their respective courses.

It's a high compliment for anyone to survive a test of this magnitude without throwing in the towel or without compromising professional standards. It's also an unfortunate reality that green committees and corporate boards will hesitate to restore budgets and fail to reward these accomplishments with a return to normalcy. And who out there doesn't long for a return to how it once was?

Remember, for better or for worse, eventually this too shall pass. **GCI**



Mike Zawacki Editor

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FEEDBACK

We'd like to hear from you.

E-mail us at gci@gie.net with your thoughts and opinions.

'Family' thanks

Pat Jones' recent article, "All in the Family," (April, Parting Shots, page 90) has struck a chord with me. Working for a small, regional independent distributor of soft goods – his article was greatly appreciated. I'll keep this article for the occasional pick-me-up when things look dire. Keep fighting for value and the good guys in this business!

Chris Hoff
Sales representative
Precision Turf & Chemical Inc.
Greenfield, Minn.

I had to tell you how much I loved Pat Jones' column in the April issue regarding local/regional distributors ("All in the Family," page 90). Even though I'm now in Rhode Island, it made me realize how important Grass Roots Inc. in New Jersey has been to me personally and professionally over the years. There's no question these businesses provide a service that national companies just can't match. Hey, it's the main reason the GCSAA's attempt to broker products through the Big Guys would never work. I think they know that now.

Thanks for recognizing just how vitally important these local companies really are. You opened my eyes to something that's been right in front of me all these years.

Ed Walsh, CGCS
Golf course superintendent
Shelter Harbor Golf Club
Charlestown, R.I.

A dose of humor

I like Pat Jones' column in GCI. I've always liked his insight into the turf industry. Some in our business must stop taking everything so seriously. Our image is important, but we certainly aren't oppressed coal workers that "the man" is holding back. We're all fortunate to be in this business; it seems to me some should enjoy it more. Screw anyone who can't laugh at themselves or see the humor in the written word.

Thad Thompson
Superintendent
Terry Hills Golf Course
Batavia, N.Y.

SEEN ON **twitter**

@turfdisorders:

Nice article by @gcimagazine on Dr. Bruce Clarke, Rutgers Turfgrass Pathologist.

(In reference to "The fungus among us," May issue, page 24)

@mfounds:

@gcimagazine I'm liking the spine to your May issue. Made me think of my Synchronicity LP, circa 1983.

@AtlanticGolf:

Superintendents... is social media right for your career? Thanks to @gcimagazine for a great article.

(In reference to "Is social media right for your career," May issue, page 32)

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