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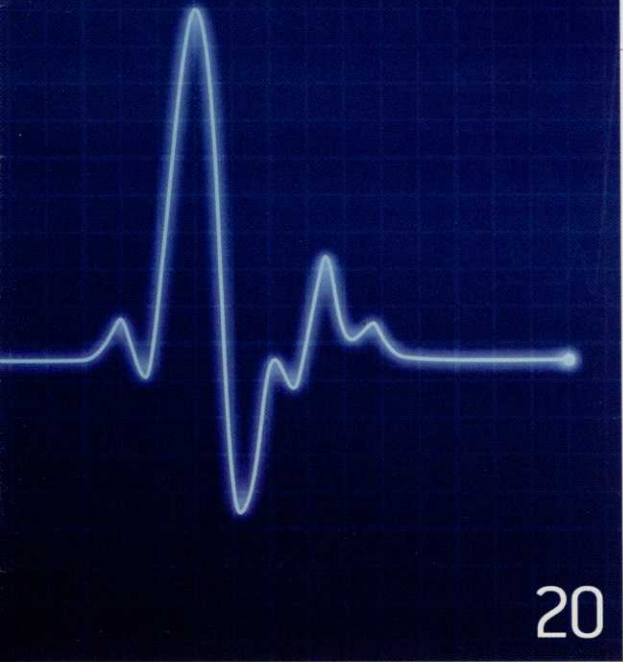
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MY FAVE FIVE

Last week, in a desperate attempt to create a believable premise for this column, I decided to keep a log to document just how much time I spend wrapped up in my only little digital world.

(You might be thinking, "Jonesy, you have no life and will do anything to get yet another column done." Well, you are right – and I hate you for knowing me so well.)

So I put sticky notes on my laptop and my now beloved iPad and made a little hash mark on them for every hour I sat in front of the magic glowing screen.

(I found out later there are a number of free computer programs to track the time you spend on your computer. Ironically stupid, eh?)

Anyway, I did the math over the weekend and discovered I averaged nine hours a day in front of a magic glowing screen. Nine frickin' hours a day, kids! More than half of my waking life, I am doing what I'm doing now: tapping away furiously at a keyboard, toggling between e-mail, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, several customized programs and, lest we forget, visiting the wondrous land of the Internet.

(Let me pause to pay tribute to the late Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska, the man who brought you the "Bridge to Nowhere," who once said: "The Internet is not something that you just dump something on. It's not a big truck. It's a series of tubes. And if you don't understand, those tubes can be filled and if they are filled, when you put your message in, it gets in line and it's going to be delayed by anyone that puts into that tube enormous amounts of material." He went on to suggest Al Gore be impeached for inventing those damned tubes. But I digress...)

Anyway, in my continuing examination of my own computer usage habits, I also gulped hard and counted the number of Internet bookmarks I maintain. The total was 122.

(And no, none of them are porn links, at least as far as my IT manager knows. I just hope he never opens the folder named "Serious Important Business Stuff and Not Hot MILF Sites or Anything Inappropriate Like That.")

While I was looking at my list of totally porn-free bookmarks, I started to consider

which websites I liked and visited the most and decided to share them with you:

- Facebook: The American public is divided about whether Facebook is an utter waste of time, a playground that encourages people to post stupid things that bore or amuse others or the greatest source of personal connectivity every created. The American public is right on all three counts. Facebook is redefining how a chunk of the world relates to the rest of the world. It sounds crazy, but it's a serious social revolution too often hidden behind "Mafia Wars," "Farmville" and videos of cute kittens stuck in tissue boxes.

- Wikipedia: Go to Wikipedia and do a search for the Colbert-ism "truthiness" and you will know everything you need to know about Wikipedia. If you're looking for quick, sort-of-right answers, this is the place for you.

- iGoogle: All your crap in one place. Just go to the plain old Google homepage, click on iGoogle and start building your own little information universe. If you want to know more, the doorway to the great and powerful Oz of search engines is right there on the same page. Magnificent efficiency that proves why the guys who built it are gozillionaires.

- Progressbook: If you have kids, you probably have this online service or something like it. It's a password-protected site that lets you keep nearly real-time tabs on your children's grades, attendance and behavior. Absolutely wonderful tool for dad and mom. Sucks hard for kids.

- Epicurious: My second-favorite iPad app (besides GCI's). It's a wonderful searchable database of unbelievable recipes rated by quality, ease of preparation and popularity. It's an endless source of entertainment and food orgasms.

Those are my five. Love to hear yours. But, before you shoot off your e-mail with your list, wait a few weeks and check out GCI's newly redesigned, revamped and redunkulously cool new site. Same URL, same great original content but way more slick stuff designed to keep you glued to your computer for nine frickin' hours a day. Enjoy! GCI



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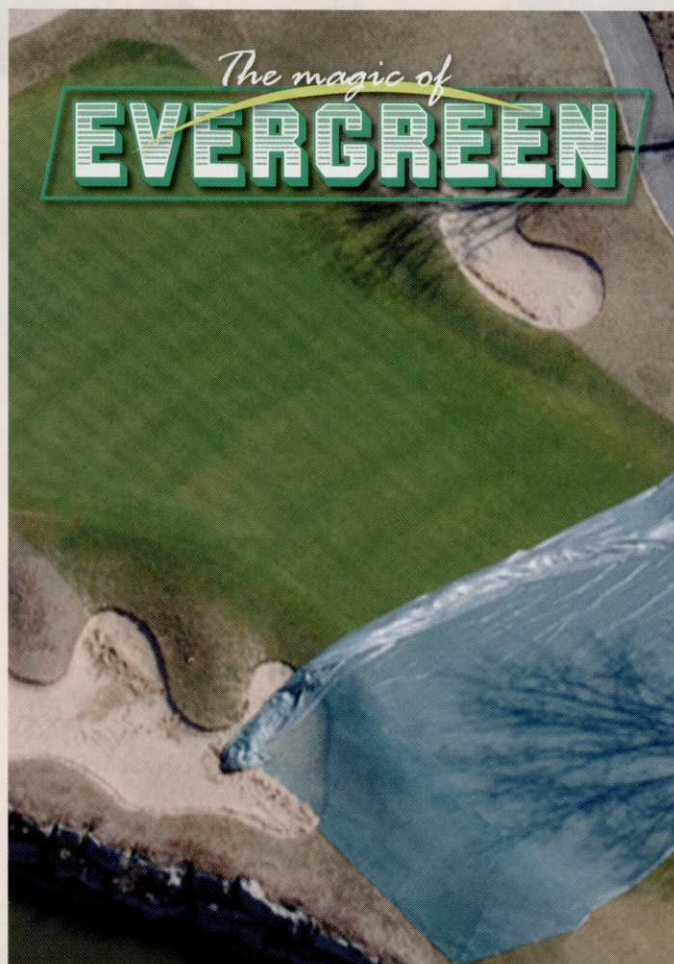
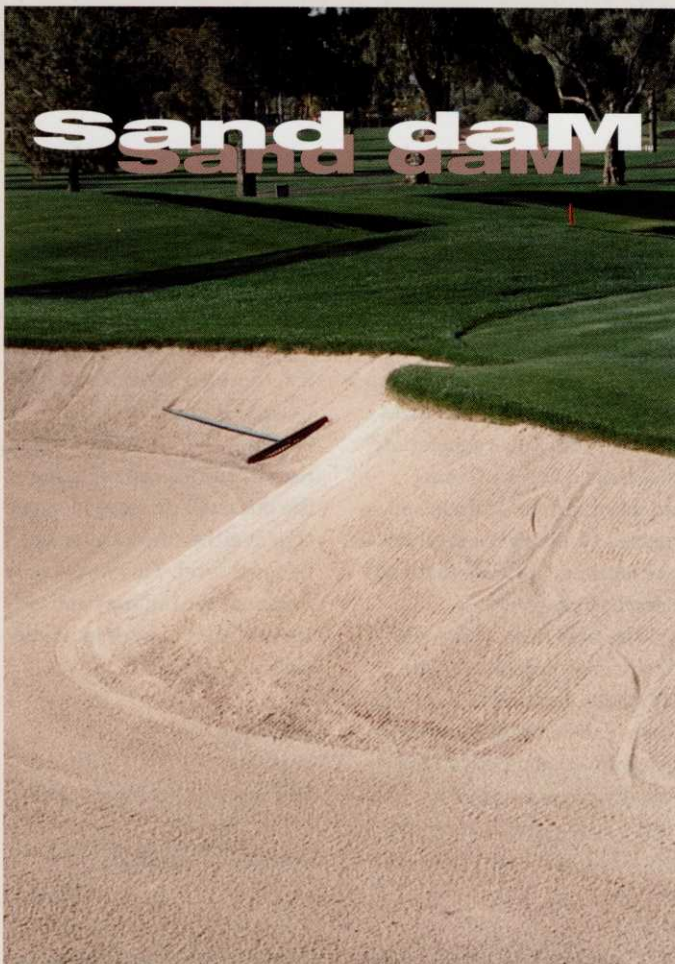
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Five flaws

"Truth & Consequences" (October 2010, page 50) certainly addresses the current situation we all face as businesses and organization leaders. However, the unsaid conclusion that people would join a local affiliate if they didn't have to join the national organization has many flaws.

The first flaw. I haven't heard many people say, "I am not getting my money's worth out of this association and affiliation; therefore I am not paying my dues."

And I have heard, "I can't afford to belong right now. There

isn't enough money to pay my dues."

The effects of the recession and oversupply are the real culprits here. Would this still be a problem if everyone's revenues were at pre-recession levels?

The second flaw. Because we have affiliation agreements, the supplier side of our industry has a clear understanding of who they need to work with to meet their own objectives. This supplier side provides tremendous amount of funds for infrastructure support of both the local and national groups. Can anyone really imagine trying to operate a statewide affiliation on \$50 or \$100 dues today and still be effective?

The third flaw. As affiliated groups we become the voice of

golf, representing thousands of courses, owners, superintendents, professionals, employees and golfers. Could we be as effective in unaffiliated groups?

The fourth flaw. The affiliation between local and national groups has led to more cooperative efforts with the organizations in golf. This cooperation has helped foster a "we are in this together" attitude and helped eliminate some of the "us versus them" attitude that had long been in place.

The fifth flaw. This could be the most important. The affiliation has helped to provide more and better informational, educational and networking opportunities for all of us. This is the active part of membership. The more active you are –

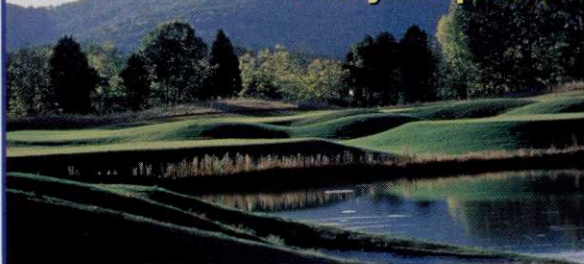
whether you are on the Internet searching through the organizations Websites or attending workshops and conferences – the more opportunity you have to become better at what you do.

While this is an extensive list, there are probably some items that could be added. However, I don't think breaking the affiliations and reducing the dues will increase membership at either the local or the national level. This would only fragment the industry and create obstacles to both local and national objectives.

Jeff Hoag
President
Golf Systems Inc./Scott Lake
Country Club
Comstock Park, Mich.

Want to access this article?
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Social media

Congratulations on keeping us in the field updated and keeping Golf Course Industry alive and well.

I really enjoy any piece you do about the digital age like "The Social Networker" (October, page 24). This is the way things are going and we have to embrace it.

Eric J. von Hofen
Director of agronomy and building maintenance
Riviera Country Club
Coral Gables, Fla.

Want to access this article?

Enter <http://tinyurl.com/29ua2d3> into your Web browser to read "The Social Networker."

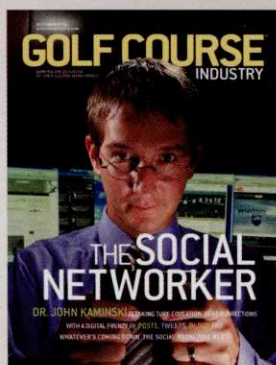


Figure it out

Good article ("Truth and Consequences") concerning required reciprocity. We have struggled with this issue at our chapter. I was not and still not supportive of it.

Also, I have brought up many times at meetings (some in the GCSAA HQ just down the road from me) the use of a sliding membership dues structure based on a maintenance budget ratio. Should the superintendent of Flinthills National (a friend of mine) with a budget from God in the seven-figure range pay the same amount as me with my five-figure budget? I have a landscape business, too, and used to be a member of the American Association of Nurseryman and there sliding scale was great for the mom-and-pop nursery. I have a feeling the GCSAA maybe more conducive to this approach in these times.

Kevin Fateley
President
Kansas Golf Course Superintendents
Association
Wildcat Creek Golf and Fitness

Hard times

"Truth and Consequences" was right on target. The genesis of GCSAA was from a local group of greenskeepers right here in Rocky River, Ohio. The health of the local chapters is and always has been the strength of the national organization. Take care of the locals and you will have a strong national.

The requirement of belonging to GCSAA if you belong to the local sounded good at the time except for the fact that the cost of

multiple memberships got pricey – the 1st and 2nd assistant superintendents plus the superintendent is a major expense even for a high-budget club. It's good to have the assistants as members of the local, but it's not necessary that they belong to the GCSAA as long as there is one GCSAA member from that organization.

These are tough times and clubs/courses are looking for every way to conserve dollars. This idea may cut a few assistants for the membership rolls of GCSAA now, but I think it would promote their joining once they became a superintendent.

Frank Dobie
Superintendent and general manager
Sharon Golf Club
Sharon Center, Ohio

"Catharsis"

Have been meaning to tell you what a great article you wrote ("Catharsis," August 2010, page 4)! Your experience mirrors my brother's adventure almost to a tee (pardon the golf term). Like you, he has taken the steps to right the ship and is back on the road to success. Congratulations and thanks for the courage to share your story.

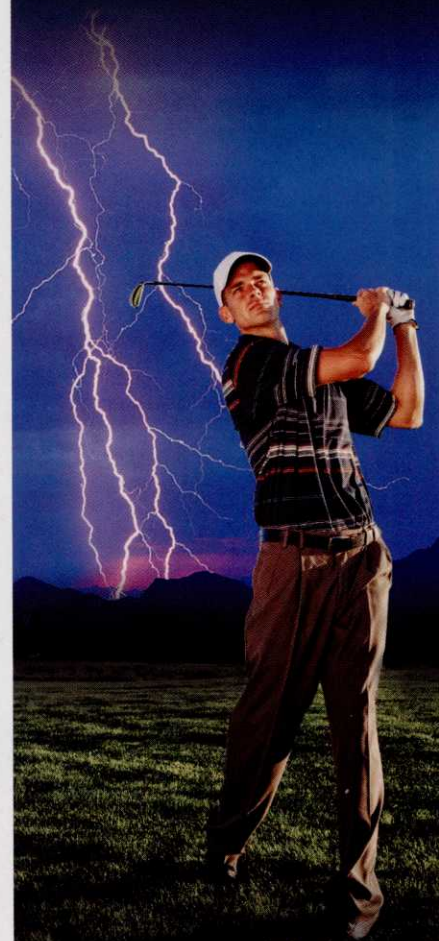
Editor's Note: Due to the sensitive nature of this feedback, the name has been withheld for privacy reasons. Readers seeking info about alcoholism and addiction can find out more at the Alcoholics Anonymous site: www.aa.org.

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The Oakland Hunt

GCI's man about the Carolinas, Trent Bouts, files this dispatch from November's hunt at the Oakland Plantation Turf Farm.

Each fall, general manager Rick Neisler III and the folks at Oakland Plantation Turf Farm stage several hunts for clients and other industry members across three tracts that make up the roughly 10,000-acre property. Golf course superintendents in the Carolinas prize a place on the invitation-only hunts like they do a

turfgrass professor at North Carolina State University, did a bit of nail-biting in his stand because one bear flatly refused to give up the corn pile he or she was gorging on down below. After considerable thought - that's what professors do after all - Miller, took a few steps down his ladder and swinging by one arm, combined yelling and flashlight glare, managed to scare off the beast.

Later that night, hunters including Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association executive director, Tim Kreger, found themselves stranded in a different fashion - stuck on a conked out pontoon boat on the Cape Fear River.

"We were jugging for catfish when the engine gave out," he says. "Fortunately we were one of two boats and the others found us and towed us in. There were a lot of jokes flying back and forth. It's dark and cold and you're not pulling in any fish but it's great, you can't buy laughs like that."

For all the good humor, golf course superintendents rarely leave their work far behind. For years now, Avery and fellow veteran, Butch Sheffield, CGCS from North Ridge Country Club in Raleigh, N.C. have made sure to bunk in the same cabin.

"I've got to admit there's a lot of turf talk that goes on," Avery says. "In its own way it's nearly as educational as some of the formal seminars and conferences out there. It's a great environment to check in with guys about how their year has been, what they've tried, what's worked and what hasn't."



70-degree day in August.

"I don't even think for a second when my invitation arrives," says Ray Avery, the veteran superintendent at Longview Club in Charlotte, N.C. "I don't bat an eyelid. I just pick up the phone and say 'OK, I'm in.' Then I worry about how I'm going to make it work"

It turns out that Avery is as sharp with a shotgun as he is as a superintendent. Since his first Oakland hunt in the early '90s, he has fired his gun 19 times and brought in 18 deer.

But it's the camaraderie, the stories traded around the bonfire and the simple fact of sharing an experience, that he values most of all. "Rick (Neisler) is the hunt master and he is very serious about every aspect of the hunt itself and taking care of the property, but once you're done it's all about relaxing and winding down," Avery says.

For example, Grady Miller, a

CUT THE MUSTARD



Our condiment correspondents forwarded this dipatch into GCI's intergalactic HQ, apparently the grounds crew over at Winnetka Golf Course, Winnetka, Ill., recently put the call out for more mustard.

No, they're not training to beat the world hot dog eating record (58 franks in 12 minutes).

Instead, these guys are requesting any and all empty French's Mustard bottles 14 ounces or larger. Apparently, they use these condiment containers to carry a sand-seed mixture to fill divots and ball marks.

And while all yellow mustard may seem the same, the bottles are not, says Super Henry Michna.

Super Henry Michna recently told The Chicago Tribune that while French's Mustard may be good, their bottles outrank all others. "Because of the nozzle," he says. "The sand's able to come out quickly enough and it's got that nice curvature to the bottle. It's good ergonomics."

Michna reports he was prepared to go buy several bottles of mustard and empty out their contents, but decided to ask the community for help. He posted the request ("Wanted Dead or Alive... mustard containers that is!!!") on his blog, wgcsuperintendent.blogspot.com.

So, if you have an empty French's mustard bottle that is 14-ounces or larger, you can forward it to the Winnetka Golf Course clubhouse, 1300 Oak St., Winnetka, IL 60093.

“QUOTABLES

“You could put him on the moon and you'd still have a great golf course.”

— Georgia GCSA president Anthony Williams, CGCS, about the expertise of William Shirley, the association's 2010 Superintendent of the Year.