> "It was all so new and I was getting some heat from other guys in the business who were tired of seeing my face. But then I realized I could refer media calls to some of those same people. And that was always the goal, for everyone in the profession to benefit because it was finally a superintendent, not the golf pro, talking about the golf course."
>
> – *Jeffrey Connell, Fort Jackson Golf Club*

huge responsibility for the whole profession. My job is to make my club, my profession and, I guess, me, to look good along the way."

It may be easy for some people to forget that Mangum is 60 and has been in the business a very long time. It's not as if he fell into the role and status he now commands. Above all else he's had to be able to grow grass in order to survive so long, let alone thrive. He had to learn the other stuff on top of his "day job." None of it came as a birthright.

Mangum was a rookie superintendent at a municipal course in Montgomery, AL when the director of the Department of Parks and Recreation called to say a camera crew was on its way to film a five-minute public service announcement promoting the golf course. He wanted Mangum to do the talking.

"We didn't go out onto the golf course," Mangum says. "It was all shot in a room with a camera four feet away from my face and I had to talk for five whole minutes. I was maybe 25 and when it was done I said right there and then that I was not going to let myself feel like that again. I won't ever forget that moment staring into that camera. I hope that film doesn't exist anywhere. I'd hate to see it today."

Mangum subsequently made good use of public relations and communications education provided by GCSAA, whether at the annual conference, now Golf Industry Show, or when he was on the national board of directors. "Those are the classes guys should be taking," he says. "But what fills up first at every conference? The agronomics. You've got to get out of your comfort zone."

At 46, Davis may be closer than Mangum in age to today's me-generation but it's not like he takes that proximity for granted. More than a decade after leaving Penn State with a turf degree in 1991, Davis went back to college at Florida Gulf Coast University, graduating summa cum laude with a bachelor of arts in communication in 2007.

"You know what, everything I'm doing I'm doing because I enjoy it and I want to give back," he says. "Sure, it can be very comfortable behind the scenes. But if we want to get our profession out of the valley then we have to get out from behind our desks or we'll never get anywhere."

Ultimately, it comes down to a simple question, whether it's Esoda speaking to government officials or the likes of Davis, Farren or Mangum speaking to the Golf Channel. "Who would you rather have the people go to for information about your golf course," Mangum asks. "The general manager, the golf professional … or you?" **GCI**

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ENTER SANDMAN

Jeff argues sand capping fairways makes course expensive and unnecessarily difficult to build, but there are benefits to consider.

As a young, green-as-a-pea golf course architecture intern, I read an article lauding some upscale new course for sand capping fairways. I joked that perhaps someday, we would be building USGA spec fairways. While we haven't got there yet, we seem to be slowly moving in that direction.

The prevailing wisdom in the first 500 years of golf course building was to use native soils. As golf spread from the sandy shores of Scotland, God apparently didn't foresee the need to provide adequate sandy golf soils everywhere, and man had to adapt. Early architects experimented with soil improvements, focused mostly on greens. Improved soils for tees and fairways couldn't be far behind.

As golf courses have generally drifted further from the "natural" to the "constructed" mode, sand capping the fairways does make sense, as many golf courses have struggled with inadequate topsoil, despite many cultural attempts to correct deficiencies.

Like other trends, sand capping seemingly originates at high-end courses because: They can afford it; they are keeping up with the Jones's; or their members have unrealistically high maintenance expectations.

Since courses play follow the leader, I believe sand capping would be accelerating even faster, if not for the combination of a down golf economy and the million-dollar price tag generally associated with it.

I dislike the idea because it makes courses unnecessarily difficult and expensive to build. However, it's been necessary on some of my new and remodel projects because of inadequate topsoil quantity or quality. Where we have sand capped on renovations, it has improved the turf dramatically.

With deteriorating irrigation water quality in many areas, it is common for the existing topsoil to become contaminated with salts. In these cases, sand capping allows flushing irrigation salts through the top layer, which is becoming as much necessity as luxury in some cases. Many courses would benefit from this expensive procedure in long-term benefits, if they can afford the high upfront costs.

> "The whole process is both complicated and time-consuming during construction, which must be figured into any schedule."

So, what is involved if your course decides on this method? Most courses place a cap 6-9 inches of sand on top of their sub surface.

Many members/golfers/people mistakenly believe fairway sand capping doesn't require the same quality sand as greens mix, but it is a mistake to take that for granted. Sands vary, as some sands need 8-9 inches to drain properly in a fairway situation, while others need only 4-5 inches. A poor match of sand depth and water retention quality can create soupy or droughty conditions. Review water discharge rate curves of proposed sands to determine the right combination of sand and depth. This requires testing similar to sand-based greens, because particle size, angularity, and water retention characteristics are VERY important to your success. It is possible for a sand that is more expensive per ton to cost less to install if you can reduce the depth required.

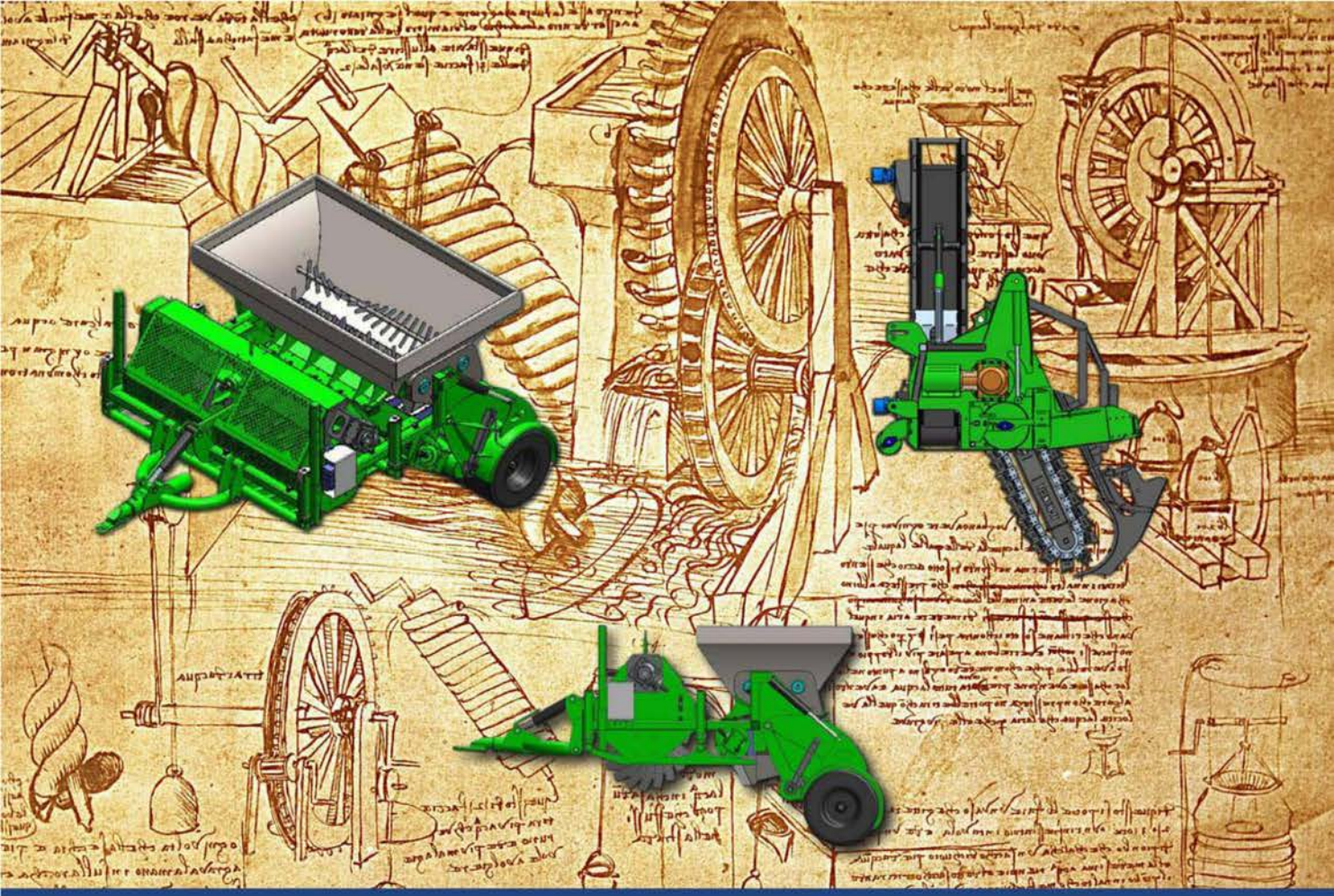
The next consideration is subsurface tile drains, which are the norm to keep drainage in control just under the sand. Without them, you sometimes create a wet zone below the surface which causes problems. Herringbone patterns similar to USGA greens are typical, but with wider spacing of up to 100 feet. With the rolling fairways, the system must be laid out perpendicular to the contours for best results.

You must choose between cutting the sand in like a USGA Green dish, and feathering out the edges, as is typical when sand capping tees. Feathering takes more sand, especially if you keep the total sand depth across the entire fairway, and the feathering occurs in the rough. Blending naturally from 0 to 6-9 inches on a gradual, land conforming slope (you don't want an abrupt edge on every fairway) can require 5 to 20 extra feet of sand.

You also have to be cognizant that adding 6-9 inches of sand will disrupt some natural drainage patterns, and plan catch basins and pipe on the high sides where necessary.

The whole process is both complicated and time-consuming during construction, which must be figured into any schedule. There are also maintenance ramifications, including modifying your irrigation scheduling and system.

The sand cap will probably use up to 25 percent more irrigation than before, although that may decrease with a developing root mass/thatch layer. And the irrigation need differential between sand fairway and clay-based roughs may become similar to a USGA greens surrounded by clay soils, possibly requiring part-to-part circle heads at the fairway perimeter. At the very least, the superintendent will have to adjust his/her run times. **GCI**



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Henry DeLozier is a principal in the Global Golf Advisors consultancy. DeLozier joined Global Golf Advisors in 2008 after nine years as the vice president of golf for Pulte Homes. He is a past president of the National Golf Course Owners Association's board of directors and serves on the PGA of America's Employers Advisory Council.

GETTING FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Pursue and sustain excellence at your course.

We're in constant pursuit of excellence. It is our nature to want to improve and be the best we can be.

Three decades ago, author Tom Peters put that time-honored truth onto the pages of a business best-seller and he's still adding disciples and riding the financial windfall.

Long before Peters prescribed a path to excellence, Dr. Martin Luther King was reminding us that excellence should be the goal of us all.

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry," King said. "He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

You would have to say legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, whose UCLA teams won 10 national championships in 12 seasons, knew something about excellence and motivating players toward that goal. "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have the time to do it over?" the Wizard of Westwood often asked.

Excellence is the objective for every club and every course, as well as for the people who run them. But in the absence of great motivators like Wooden and King, how do we pursue – and most importantly sustain – excellence? Here are five actions to consider.

DEFINE WHAT EXCELLENCE MEANS FOR YOUR COURSE OR CLUB. Be specific and describe the circumstances, services and conditions that define excellence in all of the areas in which you have responsibility. For example, what agronomic standards will be the goal of your club? What improvements will you commit to? What steps will you and your staff take to improve the educational levels you bring to the job?

DREAM BIG AND SET GOALS THAT LEAD TO EXCELLENCE. In "Good to Great," author James Collins encourages seekers of greatness to develop BHAGs – big, hairy, audacious goals. The improved likelihood of achieving greatness as a result of setting and working toward aggressive goals is proven in the sports and corporate worlds. Club managers, golf professionals and golf course superintendents can do the same. What's your BHAG?

> "The key to consistently performing at a high level is repetitive action and practice."

SET MEASURABLE GOALS. Set your goals and measure results against a pre-established standard of excellence. Goals without measurement are simply good intentions. Just as you can measure green speed or moisture content in the soil, you also can measure excellence in its simplest forms.

ESTABLISH A REPEATABLE PATTERN FOR SUCCESS. Which actions and results create the standard of excellence that you're seeking? Which systems and processes sustain the desired results? Is it time-oriented, volume-specific or a percentage of a greater whole? Things that get measured get managed; they also tend to get better.

How will you and your management team consistently exceed the standards you have set? The key to consistently performing at a high level is repetitive action and practice. One must invest the time and effort to become extremely proficient at executing the aggregation of simple acts that add up to superior results. As Aristotle wrote, "We are what we repeatedly do ... excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

In "Outliers," author Malcolm Gladwell told of the law of 10,000 hours. He cited the example of the night-after-night practice that the Beatles invested in the early '60s, testing sounds, instruments, lyrics and rhythms to create what everyone who has never paid the price of 10,000 hours assumes to be a gift. If excellence is a gift, it is a gift those who achieve it bestow on themselves.

EVALUATE, ADJUST AND RAISE THE BAR. In "Good to Great," Collins makes the point that "good enough" never is. The pattern of superior performance must be monitored and improved in order to sustain progressive improvement. Each manager – from the GM to the superintendent – must develop a reiterative method of study and evaluation to ensure the outcome continually improves.

In any business, there are those who excuse themselves from the pursuit of excellence by assigning blame or making excuses. They never seem to have the budget or the staff or the support to do an excellent job. These are the same people who get stuck in the same ruts and seem eternally frustrated.

In contrast, the pursuit of excellence can be extremely empowering. In concert with your owners and managers, set goals for the coming year that are reachable under current conditions and with your very best effort. Once you achieve those goals, you might just find that it's a lot easier to ask for a budget increase and maybe a larger staff to tackle the next set of goals. **GCI**

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Roadside assistance

Can't wait for an expert tech? Here's a quick troubleshooting guide to common mower maladies.

by Jason Stahl

Erik Sides sees it time and time again. Golf crews think they're doing something good when they meticulously wash off a mower after use, sometimes every day. But they don't realize the harm they could be doing to the mower's electrical components.

"Washing the mowers is great, but a lot of times they're using an irrigation line with irrigation water pressure which is really high with a huge amount of water," says Sides, executive director of the Equipment & Engine Training Council. "If they spray the instrument panel area where the key and PTO switches are, water intrusion into those switches could cause a 'no-start' condition down the road."

Another issue, Sides adds, occurs when the source for water typically used for washing is

The good book

One common sense issue rarely thought of when troubleshooting an issue with a mower, for example, is referencing the service or operations manual.

"A lot of times, the operator book will have plenty of information even for a novice to go through and read and troubleshoot some things," says Eric Sides, executive director of the Equipment & Engine Training Council.

One of the best ways to head off improper operation issues, says Tracy Lanier, product manager, John Deere Golf, is to have a good understanding of how, for example, a greens mower is supposed to operate. She calls this understanding "what's normal" with the operation, and reading the operator manual is key.

"You can prepare ahead of time by spending time reading the operators manuals and becoming familiar with the machine," Lanier says. "Knowing where the operator manuals are stored is also very helpful when the technician is not around to help answer the question."

Reading the operator manual, for instance, would help avoid the tendency to leave marks on the green, tear up the hill or slip while going up a hill. How? By understanding what the proper tire pressure is.

"You ask, 'Why is there 26 lbs. of air in this tire?'" says Ron Laurita, product and technical manager for Jacobsen.. "And they say, 'Well, it didn't look right.' It's only supposed to have 10 lbs. of air, but they overinflate it because they only gave it the eye test. It's always good to verify with a tire gauge."

Turf equipment are amazing machines, so it's good to know how to keep it in top condition and how to best troubleshoot in-field issues.

reclaimed water high in sulfides and salt, which can wreak havoc on metal and cause corrosion.

"It may not happen right away, but a week or a month down the road, you have a no-start condition because the contacts in the key or PTO switch have been corroded," says Sides.

Keeping washing to a minimum allow golf crews to avoid having to troubleshoot no-starts down the road, says Ron Laurita, product and technical manager for Jacobsen.

"We recommend washing only once a week and blowing them off with air the rest of the time," Laurita says. "Limit the water to the cutting units and air blow the actual machine. If you want to hand wash, fine, but we don't recommend pressure washing because it promotes more problems."

Washing aside, the No. 1 problem Laurita hears about at his call center is that the unit won't "start" or "crank." The cause is usually related to battery cables that have molded terminals, which can corrode over time. However, since these terminals are molded, you can't see the corrosion.

"Probably the easiest thing you can do to eliminate that is to take a pair of cutters and cut that molded terminal off, strip the wires slightly and put one of those clamp-on style replacement battery terminals on the wire, which will give you a new area to which you can connect the cable," Laurita says. "And the average guy can do that."

Another common problem has to do with hydraulics. Following proper filter change procedures, Laurita supports the old adage: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

"Your most important hydraulic filter change is in the first 50 hours of use," he says. "The reason is because every single component on that machine is tight and has to break itself in, and you're going to get the most metal contamination in a hydraulic system within the first 50 hours."

Sides sees hydraulic leaks all the time, typically from golf crews not having a routine preventative maintenance schedule in place to make sure there is no hose damage.

"I'm out mowing and all of a sudden a hose bursts and I have oil all over a green or tee box," says Sides. "A lot of that is preventable through either a daily or weekly inspection of hoses."

The main hoses to watch are the ones responsible for moving reels and decks up and down, Sides says. For four-wheel drive machines, it can be hoses for the rear wheels because those wheels are always moving left-right-left-right.

Hose issues are fixes that are typically done in the field, Sides says. "Before you get it back to the shop, you'll either a) have to go out and tow the piece of equipment back in slowly, or b) fix it in the field. But a lot of times, it's, 'The mower shut off while I was mowing.' A seat switch or a wire has fallen off because it got grabbed by something. I typically don't like operators trying to diagnose an issue – it's best to leave it up to someone who knows the

machine in and out, knows the safety circuits and has the skills to do the repair."

Another thing best left to a trained technician is anything that requires opening into or removing a fitting from a hydraulic circuit. "That's something someone who doesn't know what they're doing doesn't want to get involved with," Laurita says. "You can introduce contamination into the system without realizing it. Also, let's say you want to work on the cutting units and they're up in the air and have a leaky cylinder. The first thing the guy does is crack a fitting loose. Well guess what? All that pressure is up against that fitting, and now he shoots oil on himself."

When it comes to electronics, Laurita sees a tendency for operators to blame the electric controllers or computer system on the machine because it's a "big black mystery box they don't understand." Very rarely, though, is that the cause of the problem.

"It's usually something simple, so I always recommend starting with the simple things first because nine times out of 10, it will be something simple: batteries, filters, cables, connections, etc." he says.

Even so, sometimes there are electrical issues, most commonly with safety circuits, says Tracy Lanier, product manager, John Deere Golf.

"This can be easily diagnosed on our 2500B PrecisionCut and 2500E E-Cut riding greens mowers with our 'Sit on Seat' on-board diagnostics system," Lanier says. "This system, along with our white-box controller,

A "HOLE" OTHER MACHINE

Aerators are different beasts entirely than mowers in that they're more mechanical with less electrical components. This dictates whether they can be accurately diagnosed and fixed out in the field without an expert involved. And when it comes to aerators, the recommendation is "no." If there is a bent time, broken belt or loose chain, Sides says it's best for the operator to shut the machine down and notify somebody.

"Whether it's a supervisor, mechanic or superintendent, they should be informed that something is wrong – because they could tear up where they're aerating or, mechanically speaking, they could further damage the machine," Sides says. "If it comes out of time, you have pieces that could hit together and break and cause some severe damage."

One might think that, because aerators are simpler than mowers, they can be fixed by nearly anyone. But Ron Laurita, product and technical manager for Jacobsen, disagrees.

"Even though aerators are slightly simpler without sophisticated electronics, there are a lot of moving parts – chains, sprockets and belts – to get all that reciprocating motion," he says. "It's important to keep the contamination out of that, too. If you take care of the little things, the big things will take care of themselves."

Playing the sleuth

Getting operator feedback is one of the most critical steps in determining what exactly is wrong with a piece of equipment.

"You must ask the right questions, because a lot of times you don't want just yes or no answers," says Sides. "You have to have some questions you're asking specifically to get answers to find out what happened. For example, if the operators just says, 'It doesn't work,' I don't know anything and I go out there blind. But, to get to the root of the problem, I can ask, 'Did it shut off on you?' 'Where were you when it happened?' 'How long have you been out mowing?' 'Does it happen when it's hot or is it happening when it first starts up?'"

John Deere's Tracy Lanier agrees some issues may require the operator to explain what they were doing or attempting to do when the problem occurred.

"This, along with your understanding of what's normal with the operation, can help you quickly determine the issue," she says.

Adds Toro's Greg Hollahan, technical service systems manager, interviewing the operator is "absolutely vital to the troubleshooting process. The operator should be able to describe sounds, smells and even the mowing environment like hillsides or obstacles at the time of the issue. A step-by-step narrative of the incident can help piece together what might have been the contributing factors to the breakdown."

can be quickly checked to solve these issues. The information to help with the troubleshooting is located in the operator's manual."

The Toro Company stresses that customers should not try to "wing it" when addressing and remedying equipment issues in the field.

"With any mower problem, large or small, if the on-site mechanic is unavailable, it's very important for the superintendent to contact the distributor as the next course of action," says Greg Hollahan, technical service systems manager at Toro. "We recommend using caution in allowing just anyone except for authorized mechanics to service the equipment. They may not be familiar with a product's safety systems and could inadvertently disable it; that could lead to dreadful results."

But when it comes to preventative maintenance, a key to avoiding potential equipment malfunctions in the field, Hollahan believes those responsibilities can be handled by other staffers as well.

"The first step would be to locate the golf course's preventative maintenance procedures manual," he says. "It's crucial to continue to perform preventative maintenance in the absence of a mechanic. The manuals are typically centrally located and easily accessible to all golf course personnel so that anyone can see what machines need maintenance on any given day. The mechanic would look at that and evaluate what needs to be done that day. However, this process can be managed by other course staff members as well." **GCI**

Jason Stahl is a Cleveland-based writer and frequent GCI contributor.

Monroe Miller retired after 36 years as superintendent at Blackhawk CC in Madison, Wis. He is a recipient of the 2004 USGA Green Section Award, the 2009 GCSAA Col. John Morley DSA Award, and is the only superintendent in the Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame. Reach him at groots@charter.net.

MOVING FORWARD

Coping when you realize you have more past than future in life?

Autumn has always been my favorite season. Fall color is beautiful, even stunning in some quarters. It is harvest time in the country. From corn and bean fields to apple orchards and pumpkin patches, the rush to get the crop out is everywhere. Late-season baseball, football and early-season basketball games keep us well-entertained.

But late autumn can also be melancholy. Here in the north, the landscape becomes very stark, the days are often gray and noticeably shorter, and we know before long the tough days of winter will be here.

It is an especially sad time this year for turfgrass people in our state. We are a pretty close group – golf course superintendents, sod producers, sport turf managers and lawn care providers. Many of us have worked in more than one area of turfgrass management, something that adds to our familiarity with each other. Our Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation, and the UW – Madison Turf Team do a lot to tie us altogether.

We grieved for one of our colleagues who was overwhelmed by circumstances at his golf course and his life in general and ended it all with his own hand earlier this summer.

Another of our friends, who has been a strong and longtime leader in golf course and turf organizations, succumbed to pancreatic cancer in October. A celebration of his productive life was held at the club he worked. The large crowd assembled there wept when the mournful sound of a bagpiper brought home our loss. We looked on as a maple tree was planted near the clubhouse in his honor.

A past president of one of our state turfgrass associations is struggling with his wife's malignant brain tumor. And one of my good friends of almost 50 years – we were turfgrass undergrads together – is battling the same. Each of us worked at a private club in our town, golf courses about 15 minutes apart. Two of his sons worked at our course and we helped each other many times over the years.

It was during the Christmas season last year that he invited me for lunch and laid out the details of his illness. He was frank and realistic. The chances for complete recovery weren't the best, but he was going full-speed ahead, undergoing the maximum treatments to push the tumor into remission and give him as much time as possible. His attitude, as he declared so clearly to me, was "moving forward positively." And he repeated it to me when we last got together.

He is a courageous man. I think of all the years that he and any other golf course superintendent worry almost to a fault about what now seem rather small matters. We spend years trying to meet what are sometimes unreasonable expectations of what often is a small cadre of complainers. I know – it has to be done; it is part of the profession that we love. A serious illness like his puts a different perspective on at least part of the job we have to do.

This man left the golf course somewhat sooner than I did and established himself as a turfgrass entrepreneur. His career shift gave him more time to do the things he enjoyed and things he needed to do. For these last years, he has been in control of his life. Until now.

These days he finds solace in the here and now, but he also is planning for the unknown future. A trust has been established; the house was readied for sale if it comes to that; frivolous accumulations from years past have gone to charity. His courage is matched by reality. He is moving forward positively.

> "Clearly, it helps if you realize that life is more precious than anything."

Life is changing rapidly for him, and I am amazed how he alters and revises the important issues at hand. He is open to what is actually happening to him and his family. He is spending as much time as he can with his wife and sons and their spouses and his grandchildren. They enjoyed a beautiful cruise together, cementing bonds that will last a couple of generations. He owns a piece of property in northern Wisconsin that is used primarily for hunting and logging. They are making plans for the deer season, which is rapidly approaching. Every day he is moving forward positively.

Circumstances that would depress and discourage most of us seem not to have done that to him. I believe a lot of this is due to his religious faith. What else could it be? He seems not obsessed by the worst case because he isn't afraid of it. He is tranquil and serene; faith will do that for you.

I think a lot about how I would handle a fate like his. Clearly, it helps if you realize that life is more precious than anything. On that day when you recognize you have more past than future you push hard for the most you can get from life.

That is what my friend is doing; that is what he means by moving forward positively. **GCI**