

Business briefs

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increased 1.4 percent to \$166.5 million from \$164.1 million in 2001. Golf sales declined 4.3 percent.

"Second-quarter golf sales were disappointing, and there are no excuses," DiMino said. "We are changing the structure of the golf sales team, and we expect better results in the coming periods."

Lesco announced its third-quarter results in late October.

Billy Casper to manage Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Ill., owner of 10 golf courses and two driving ranges in the Chicago metropolitan area, has entered into a multiyear agreement with Billy Casper Golf of Vienna, Va., to manage its golf facilities.

BCG will provide turnkey-management services to the Forest Preserve District, including agronomy, beginning after the 2002 golf season.

Bush Hog, Great Bend expand

Bush Hog and Great Bend recently opened a 400,000-square-foot plant expansion at Jonesborough, Tenn., to meet demand for their equipment. The facilities are designed to meet Bush Hog's and Great Bend's manufacturing needs for the next 10 years. Additional land has been set aside for future expansion.

Leave Your Ego at the Front Gate

BY DOING SO, YOU'LL RID YOURSELF OF A LOT OF STRESS

By Jim Black

I have some humble advice about this line of work that I would like to share, especially to assistants going after your first superintendent positions and students ready to take on the real work of a golf course. That advice is this:

Leave your ego at the front gate.

In my observation as a grunt, an assistant and a superintendent, I've noticed an amazing amount of golfers who assume they know my job better than I do. I didn't think about this angle going in and thought I could just grow the grass, mow the grass and everyone would be happy. Well, I can assure you that you won't be able to please everyone — no matter what you do. This is where the trouble starts.

Unfortunately, it's human nature to focus on the negative and overlook the positive. For example, you can have a day of 250 golfers traipsing around, stomping on, driving over and chunking out your turf. I'll take an unscientific guess that 90 percent of those golfers will have no contact with you; 5.4 percent will say the course looks great; you will smile and wave to 4 percent; and then the dreaded .6 percent (one or maybe two people) will have some sort of complaint, criticism or judgement about your hard work.

Now, I don't mean to be preaching to the choir, but bear with me a minute. Who do you listen to? I would venture a guess that while the 5.4 percent complimentary people are nice to listen to, the .6 percent will grate on your nerves. You may even lose sleep over whatever the complaint was.

You will wonder why this "thing" went wrong and who's to blame. If the



ARTVILLE

A Friend of the Earth Offers Educational Tips

You might think someone like Brent Blackwelder, president of Friends of the Earth, a national environmental organization dedicated to preserving the health and diversity of the planet for future generations, would be down on golf. But Blackwelder enjoys the game and can drive and putt with the best of them. "I've spent my whole life playing golf," he says.

Blackwelder also loves the earth, and believes golf and the environ-

ment can co-exist. At the fourth National Golf & Environment Summit held in Nebraska City, Neb., earlier this year, he offered these ideas for golf courses to educate players on the importance of the environment.

- Use yardage books to convey an environmental message.

- Use signs to educate. "Sometimes signs say to keep out of an area because it's environmental," Blackwelder says. "But the sign

doesn't tell why to keep out. That message can be illuminating."

- Explain the health and harm a course can do to water and wildlife in a golfer's guide.

- Use the media for coverage on what your course is doing to preserve the environment.

- Stage a golf-and-environment tournament to raise money for environmental improvements.

— Larry Aylward, Editor

criticism isn't put forth in a constructive way you will feel like you were attacked and will probably not like this person because you think he or she doesn't like you. And most of us would want to exact some sort of strange revenge to prove ourselves right and the other wrong to save our dignity.

Well, this is the ego talking, and it takes a lot of extra (wasted) effort to satisfy our egos' needs. It doesn't have to be this way, and I would like to offer up a new perspective for whomever is willing to listen.

First of all, consider yourself. Have you been doing your best? Remember that this is a highly visible customer-service position that you're in — you are there to serve the paying customer, no matter if you are at a public or private course. If you know in your heart that you've been doing your best, then rest assured that whatever that person's problem is, it's exactly that — his problem. Don't make it yours, too.

Secondly, consider the source. People are going to ask you questions and make complaints that seem utterly ridiculous. To them, though, they seem totally valid. You know why? Because they just don't know.

But instead of having contempt for them, try a little compassion. Gain a new perspective on the person with the question or complaint. The hardest part is to obtain that perspective in the moment you are talking to them.

What kind of golfer is he? Did he play poorly today? Did he have a bad fight with his spouse the night before? Did he lose the contract he was working on?

You see, even if someone comes in with a complaint about your work, it probably has absolutely nothing to do with you. You don't have to take it personally.

If you can learn to listen constructively, do the absolute best you can do with what you have to work with and leave your ego at the gate, you may be able to rid yourself of lots of unwanted (and unjustified) heartache and stress.

Jim Black is superintendent of Twin Shields GC in Dunkirk, Md.

Getting It Straight

Golfdom erred in its presentation of Stan Kinkead's comments in our October issue in the story "Rotary Club." The reporter accidentally reversed Kinkead's comments as well as a couple of numbers, which made him seem to be wholeheartedly endorsing rotary mowers over reel mowers.

The paragraph in question should have read:

"Reel mowers do take more time, money and energy to maintain than rotary mowers, but they last longer," says Stan Kinkead, president of National Mower Co. "Rotary mowers only last four to six years, where reel mowers last eight to 10 years."

Golfdom regrets the error.

Don't Forget Your Pond's Aeration System This Winter

If your course features ponds and lakes with aeration systems and is based in a cold-weather state, you'll want to read these tips offered by Otterbine Barebo to remove and store your aerator safely for the winter.

If your course's aerator is an oil-cooled unit, subsurface unit or diffused air system, it can remain in the water during the cold season

(diffused air systems can only be kept in as long as there are no moving parts in the water). But if your course's aeration system is run by a water-cooled motor, it must be removed from the water and stored in an area where the temperature will remain above freezing. Freezing temperatures will cause the water inside the motor to expand and crush vital components. What's too cold? Otterbine Barebo offers a basic rule: If the water does not drop and remain below 30 degrees F, the unit can remain in the water.

Removal of a surface-aeration system is based on whether the unit is anchored to the bottom or moored to the pond's shoreline. If it's anchored, disconnect the anchoring lines from the unit and flip it upside down. At this point, either hoist it into the boat or tow it to

shore. If the system is moored, remove the mooring line on one side of the pond and then carefully tow the unit to shore. Anchoring the cable and mooring lines to a buoy is recommended for easy retrieval when it comes time to re-install it.

In both cases, once you have the unit on shore, remove the power cable and store it. For oil-cooled motors, simply store the unit indoors.

When the system is removed, a quick visual inspection should be performed. Glance over the float and spin the propeller to make sure the bearings are free.

Editor's note: This article was prepared by Emmaus, Pa.-based Otterbine Barebo.



When cold weather hits, it's time to store your aeration system.

