

Remember Big Brother from George Orwell's foreboding novel "1984?" His picture scowled from huge posters that exclaimed, "Big Brother is watching you," but he could never be seen in person. Nevertheless, the "all-powerful" and "forever-watching" Big Brother was an intimidating presence as the proles — that is, the people — went about living their lives.

Twenty years later, Big Brother is back, sort of, and in the golf industry no less. And get this: Golf course owners play the sinister part of Big Brother in the modern sequel, and superintendents are the poor proles.

The story goes that some superintendents are wary of the National Golf Course Owners Association joining their annual conference and show because now they won't be able to get away with doing some of the things they did at previous shows. These superintendents figure they won't be able to ditch a day's worth of educational sessions at the Golf Industry Show to play 18 holes or party into the wee hours of the morning at their hotel bars if their courses' owners are around.

Well, these superintendents have two choices: They can leave their golf clubs and party shoes at home, or they can each pack a pair of Nose-N-Glasses to wear in Orlando when they don't want to be recognized.

But the bottom line is this: If superintendents don't want to be seen doing things they're not supposed to be doing, then they shouldn't be doing those things in the first place.

If superintendents must play coy with their owners ... well ... that doesn't say much about their working relationships.

I know, it's probably mostly younger superintendents walking in the shadows so as not to be seen. They're wilder than the 40-somethings and have more energy to burn. But this is not about age and stamina.

This is about acting professional, foremost. It's also about having a good relationship with your owner, whether you report to him or her directly or not.

It's one thing to sneak out of the house

Welcome to the Show — and '1984'

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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at night when you're 16 to run with the crowd, leaving your snoozing-in-front-of-the-TV parents thinking that you're already in bed. It's another thing to trick your owner into thinking that you went to the four-hour session on Water Supply Regulations, but you really snuck off to play golf and party.

I'm not saying that superintendents shouldn't have fun at the show. It's their show, after all, and they're entitled to have a blast — and even play golf. I'm just saying they shouldn't do things on the sly.

The moral of this column is simple: If your peers are playing golf and want you to come along, you'd better ask your owner for permission to go if you think you need it. (And don't play dumb and act like you don't *know* if you need it.)

It's my impression that the most-admired employees of any enterprise are the ones who take the high road when dealing with their bosses and their co-workers. They don't try to hoodwink anybody, and they view communication as integral to solid working relationships. They also don't make rash assumptions, and they don't take authority into their hands.

What it comes down to, ultimately, is being truthful. When you purposely mislead the people with whom you work, you're deceiving them. And that's wrong.

Back to the Big Brother factor. What superintendent really wants his owner to watch his every move for three or four days because he doesn't have an on-the-level working relationship with him? That's not my idea of a having a good show.

That said, here's to all superintendents and owners having a good show — together.

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