

We roll our eyes, gnash our teeth, smack our foreheads and chug-a-lug Maalox over some of the dumb things golfers say to us on the course or in green committee meetings. The sad reality is that scenario will be repeated over and over again.

Just as there are no silver bullets in turf management, there is no silver bullet communication device that will educate all golfers all the time. But there are several ways we can reach out to the golfing public besides the internal golf club newsletter, which is still your first defense or offense depending on your state of mind and willingness to write. The good news is once you have written that blurb on why you aerify, you only have to change the date and roll it out again next year with only some cosmetic edits to freshen it up. For instance, you announce, "Hey, we just purchased the new XYZ triple-action aerifier!"

A variation on the hard copy club newsletter, of course, is the growing use of e-mails or e-newsletters to members and customers. During the dog days of summer, some Florida superintendents keep members up North informed with a monthly e-mail message talking about the summer course improvement projects. Let's hope this year they don't have to attach any hurricane damage photos. Sorry, Pensacola, you already had a repeat.

Some superintendents have found a voice on local radio sports talk shows as a means to talk about golf course maintenance issues or the their perspectives on playing conditions. But that could be dangerous if you have an obnoxious crank on the line. What? On talk radio? Seriously, more power to the guys that step up to the mike and share the real world of golf maintenance with listeners.

Another avenue that has blossomed over recent years is local and regional golf magazines and newspapers. They tend to be more localized and they don't try to compete with the *Golf Digest* type magazines. They are more social in nature and report local golf tournament results and where to play, not how to play.

I hooked up with *Florida Golf Central Magazine* seven years ago, and I've been writing two

We Have Chances to Tell Our Story

BY JOEL JACKSON



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features called Live Golf and Clippings, which give me a platform to write about golf course maintenance and superintendent issues. The features are written for lay readers and seek to educate golfers that Mother Nature rules and superintendents are people, too. The magazine is distributed in golf pro shops from Jacksonville to Melbourne down the east coast and along the Interstate 4 corridor over to the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota area on the west Coast.

I was happy to ghost write a series of 250-word articles for superintendent Terry Stroyer in the Ft. Myers area to use in a weekly newspaper. Since then he reports that he is now involved in a community newsletter and television program. Fred Seely, editor of *Golf News*, a golf weekly in Jacksonville, picked up those short informative pieces and runs them in his publication.

Superintendent Darren Davis at the Olde Florida Club in Naples happened across a local magazine called *Platinum Coast Golf* one day and e-mailed the editor to see if he would be interested in some golf stories beyond tournament results. Editors are always looking for material and Darren is now a regular contributor to the magazine, putting his spin on golf maintenance and environmental issues in his area.

Most recently an opportunity has come along to provide golf maintenance and environmental articles to the Florida State Golf Association's online newsletter that reaches 40,000 members. Certified superintendent Kevin Downing has already written an article on thatch for the first issue.

The more times and places we can tell our story, the more we can help our profession and *really* help golfers enjoy the game.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.