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20th October

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## Getting Over Getting Fired



**“Losing your job is like getting a divorce or having a death in your family.”**

— Ted Woehrle

### *Movin' On*

You've been fired, and you're wondering how it will affect your search for a new job. For starters, don't hide the fact that you were fired from a previous job. Volunteer the information rather than let an interviewer drag it out of you, says Richard Bolles, author of the best-selling job-hunting book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?*

Bolles also stresses that in a job interview you shouldn't appear angry about getting fired. That will only reveal that you're stuck in the past and not looking to the future.

James P. Kell, an Austin, Texas-based career consultant and an associate of Bolles, says a fired superintendent should also talk openly about why he was fired. But he shouldn't criticize his former boss in the interview, Kell stresses.

It's important that a fired superintendent contact someone from his former golf course — who knew the qual-

*Continued from page 30*

ity of his work — to obtain a letter of recommendation, Kell adds.

During an interview, a superintendent should ask himself:

- Is this a job I would like to have?
- Is this a job I think I can do and do well?
- Am I comfortable with the person interviewing me, and the person and the golf course I'll be working for?

If a superintendent believes an employer may discriminate against him because he was fired, the superintendent might tell the employer that he'll work for two to three weeks without pay, during which time his performance can be evaluated. But he should get the course to agree to pay him and offer him the job if it is satisfied with his work. If the employer is not satisfied with his work, the superintendent should agree to leave without pay.

Smith took a job in Alabama and worked there for about four years before returning to Arizona as superintendent of the Golf Club at Eagle Mountain, where he stayed for 4.5 years. “We were close prior to our unemployment, and it brought us even closer,” Smith says of his relationship with Snyder.

While Kell suggests fired superintendents look outside their immediate families for advice, Wood says his wife, Carlotta, was his rock when he was fired from Oak Tree. They've been married 27 years, and she helped Wood create a resume and gain strength through her encouragement.

“She told me from the get-go that everything was going to be fine,” Wood says. “She's a strong person, and she helped me hold it together.”

Snyder says his wife, Denise, also provided reassurance that helped him get through his toughest moments. “She was at her strongest during those times,” Snyder says. “That's what marriage is all about.”

**Patience and faith**

No one should expect to find a job the week after getting fired. That goes for superintendents who have hosted U.S. Opens as well as those who've only hosted city leagues.

It took Wood, who hosted a PGA Championship and U.S. Amateur at Oak Tree, about six weeks to find his current job at Lincoln Park GC in Oklahoma City. It took Woehrle, a past GCSAA president, more than a month.

Many of Woehrle's peers told him that he wouldn't have a problem finding a job because of his experience and stature. But after he sent out 100 résumés and received no responses, Woehrle began to worry. “I thought I was going to have to find another field,” he says.

About three weeks into his unemployment, Wood thought about starting a lawn service because he was worried about his finances. “Things looked bleak,” Wood says of finding a job as a superintendent.

Snyder was out of work for 10 months but says he never lost patience, which he attributes to his faith. “Through that faith comes perseverance in dealing with these types of things,” he adds.

Woehrle also gained courage by attending church and consulting his pastor. He didn't pray for a new job, but he did pray for peace and strength. “It helped,” he says.

— L.A., Editor

*Continued on page 34*

*Bring Forth the Wonder.*

*Blades of grass.*

*Green, inviting.*

*A wonder.*

*You know the wonder.*

*You are its custodians,  
the keepers of the green.*

*Y*

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CIRCLE NO. 141

## Getting Over Getting Fired

*Continued from page 32*

### Lessons learned

When he was out of work, Snyder spent more time with his family than he had in a long time. Before he was fired, Snyder's life was his work. He admits that his family came second.

"But spending all that time unemployed made me realize that what was important was right around me," Snyder says. "Our family became very tight."

Snyder enjoyed playing with his kids, even though the uncertainty of his professional life hung like a dark cloud over his head. Snyder was also there when his infant daughter took her first steps. If he had been working 12-hour days, he might have missed the event.

"That kind of stuff made me realize what's really important," he says. "It was an eye-opener."

Snyder also knew that other people had more serious problems. "Who was I to complain about my problems when others have worse problems?" he says.

The experience also enabled Snyder to find his faith in God, which helped him endure the turbulent time. When he interviewed for the job at Rio Verde, he told the green committee that his No. 1 priority was his relationship with God and his No. 2 priority was his family. "No 3, if I'm hired, will be this golf club," he told the committee.

Woehrl's unemployment experience helped him remember that there are others who are less fortunate. To stay busy and not dwell on the firing, Woehrl delivered food baskets to and provided transportation for the needy. "You can always find someone who has it worse than you do," he says.

Wood's firing made him humble, and he says he'll never take any job for granted. Wood and his crew are often praised by golfers for their work on the course, but Wood doesn't let the acclaim go to his head.

"Nobody is so secure in anything that they can't lose it any-

*Continued on page 39*

## Should I Sue or Should I Go?

Unless you have a suit that the American Civil Liberties Union will take on pro bono, most superintendents would be wise not to sue a former employer, even if they feel they were unjustly fired, suggests James P. Kell, an Austin, Texas-based career consultant.

Lawsuits are about spending money, so you had better have a lot of cash if you're tak-

ing on a golf course with deep pockets. "The course will keep the case in court longer than you can afford to pay your lawyer," Kell says.

The course and its lawyer will try to break you financially. "An ordinary person, regardless of a firing's unfairness, lacks the funds to pursue a case to its natural end," Kell says.

— L.A., Editor

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*Monsanto scientists used scanning-electron microscopy to photograph the effects of weeds sprayed with Roundup Pro and an imitator. Taken just one hour after application, these images clearly show more formulation in the leaf sprayed with Roundup Pro.*

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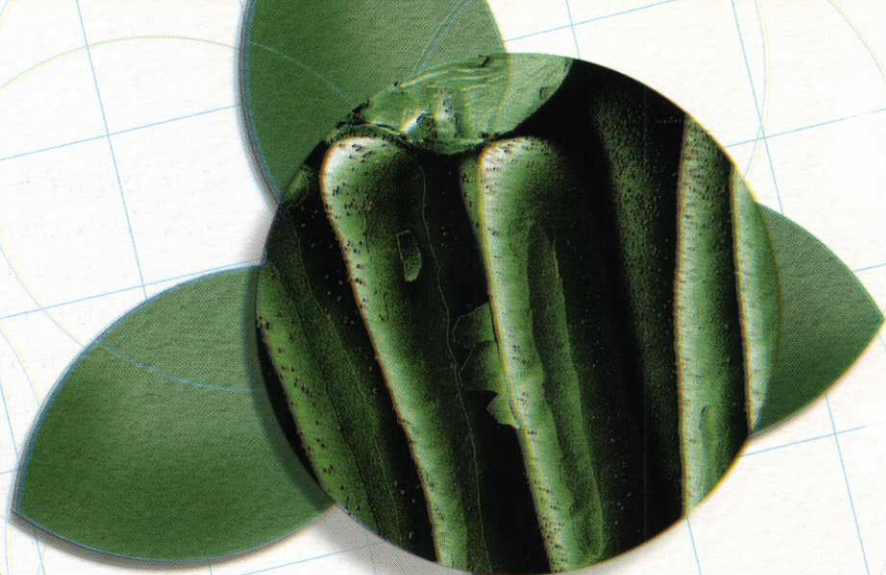
***The proof is in the roots.<sup>2</sup>***

*Scientists also used autoradiography to photograph and measure the amount of herbicide in the roots two hours after application. Time after time, at least three times more herbicide showed up in the weeds sprayed with Roundup Pro. With the imitator, barely any herbicide has moved to the roots.*





*This is a cross-section of a weed leaf magnified 1000x. The yellow droplets mean Roundup Pro is already at work inside.*

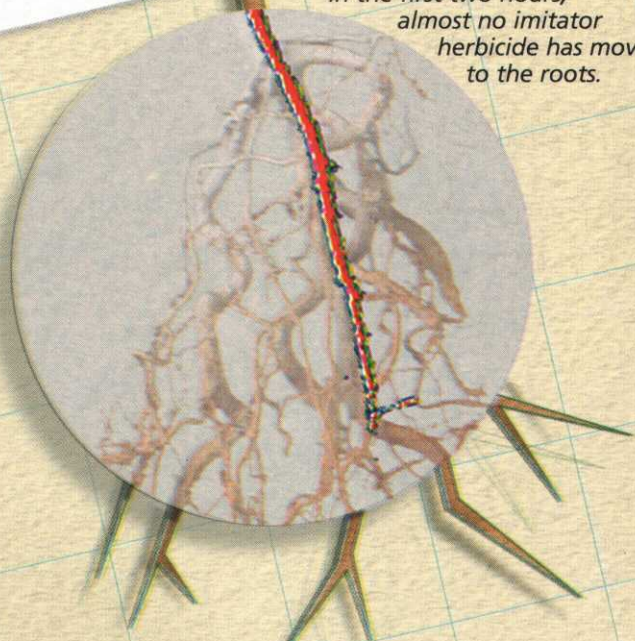


*This weed, sprayed with the imitator, has almost no droplets in the leaf.*

*Glypro Plus*

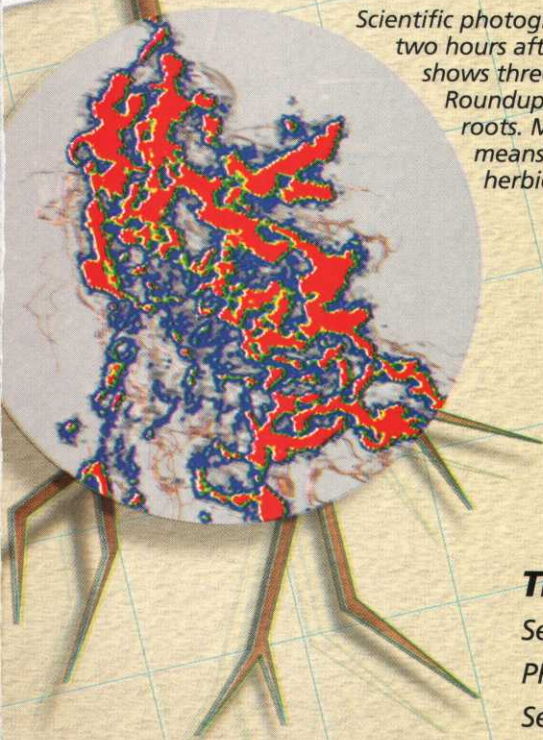
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*Continued from page 34*  
time," Wood says. "That's always in the back of my mind."

Although he's appreciative that joblessness enlightened him about a few things, Snyder will never forget the humility he experienced while being unemployed. He remembers when he felt so distraught that he was in a daze. His advice to other superintendents who might experience

the unpleasantness of losing their jobs is to grasp reality and know that they will suffer depression, frustration and anger. But they must confine those emotions and maintain patience, hope and faith, he says.

"You reap what you sow," Snyder says. "If you keep sowing anger, frustration and negativity, that's what you'll get back.

"You need to stay positive." ■

## *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow — But Don't Forget Your Severance Agreement*

More superintendents are starting to realize their profession is comparable to musical chairs. They get hired and fired and transferred. It can be a nomadic lifestyle.

So to ensure financial security, more superintendents are demanding employment contracts before taking jobs. About 25 percent of superintendents currently work

under contracts. A key benefit of an employment contract is a severance agreement.


Under a severance agreement, a superintendent receives compensation from his employer if he is fired. In exchange, the superintendent agrees not to sue his employer, which can be costly for both sides.

A superintendent with a severance

agreement is a superintendent not left in a financial pickle if he's fired.

If you're offered a severance agreement, whether it's part of an employment contract or not, experts say you should negotiate the agreement's amount. Always ask for more than your employer is offering.

— L.A., Editor



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# Seamless Transition

**Hard as it is to believe, there *are* jobs outside of being a superintendent. Here are tips about how to switch careers from those who have done it successfully**

**BY FRANK H.  
ANDORKA JR.**  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**E**ver had one of those days when you wanted to scrap the whole superintendent gig? Maybe you just *can't* take another complaint about greenspeed. Or maybe your pig-headed owner chewed you out for not producing perfect conditions after it rained for 40 days and 40 nights.

Randy Zidik knows the feeling. After 25 years of being a superintendent, he was worn out. He frequently disagreed with the membership at Rolling Hills CC in McMurray, Pa., over maintenance practices. The constant pressure to keep the golf course in perfect condition, no matter what Mother Nature threw his way, gnawed at him. The daily battles left him depressed and he was having trouble sleeping. That's when he started looking for a way out.

"It was a classic case of superintendent burnout," Zidik says. "The job wasn't fun anymore. I didn't get excited about the prospect

of getting up and going to the course. That's when I knew it was time to get out."

Zidik's refrain is heard often from superintendents who have moved on to new careers. The pressures of being a superintendent are immense and can take a toll, physically and emotionally. But a superintendent can't expect to move into another career without carefully planning his or her transition long before it becomes a necessity. Those plans should include networking at trade shows, researching other job possibilities and assessing what you *really* want from your new career.

Gary Grigg, a superintendent for 32 years before becoming an agronomic consultant in his own business, Grigg Bros., says superintendents need to plan their future careers from the day they enter the profession.

"Keep your eyes open for other opportunities and prepare to leave your superintendent's job from the beginning," Grigg says.