

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Lesson From McGuffy

I was in the Columbus, Ohio airport this fall with nearly two hours to waste while waiting for my flight back home. It is a new facility and, frankly, I had more of the feeling of being in a shopping mall than in an airport. So, with time on my hands, I went from shop to shop, browsing. One store in particular caught my eye — it was called something like "The Country Cupboard". Their wares all had a theme of days gone by — fireplace popcorn poppers, cast iron pots and pans, gingham aprons, wooden utensils and the like. There was a shelf of books and catalogs that were typical of the turn of the century. The first book I picked up and paged through was a copy of a McGuffy reader. I suspect that at one time this book was found in every one room school in America. I came across a verse that so caught my eye that I had it committed to memory within a few minutes. It went like this:

"The wise old owl sat in an oak.
The more he saw, the less he spoke,
The less he spoke, the more he heard.
Why can't we be like that wise old bird?"

I'm sure it affected me the way it did because of its simple but powerful lesson — there is much more to be gained by listening than there is by speaking. It is such an obvious point that it seems nearly trite. After all, as an ancient philosopher pointed out, nature gave man one tongue and two ears so that he can hear twice as much from others as he speaks himself!

Let me declare that the drumbeat of my term as President of the WGCSA will be "listening". Any of us who have experienced a measure of success as Golf Course Superintendents have learned the art of listening: hearing what members and players expect from us, listening to suggestions from the USGA Agronomist, learning from the experiences of our peers. The list could go on and on. I also recognize, in the context of my own experiences, that all too often I hear words but neglect to really listen and understand their meaning. That mistake will not be made during the upcoming year. Any good works accomplished by the Officers and Board of Directors in 1984 will be determined by what we hear from our members.

So I beg of you, talk to us. Tell us what's on your mind. We want to hear what you feel we should be doing, what our goals should be, and what the role of our Association should be in the "world of Wisconsin golf". If you will share your thoughts with us, we will do our best to respond. Offer constructive criticism if it is in order. Be complimentary of our actions that meet your approval. But please, talk to us.

My message is not intended to be any kind of inaugural address, complete with catchy phrases and contrived slogans. But I do desperately want to convey a tone and direction for the next year in the history of the WGCSA, and I want it to be a good year. I want everyone to understand that I am honored to hold the office, that I am serious about the attending responsibilities and that I am genuinely excited by the confidence shown in me. Above all, I want to do a good job — the kind of job you want me to do.

As the months go by, tell me how I'm doing. I promise I'll listen!

Monroe S. Miller
President