



RAISING MONEY IS HARD WORK

By Monroe S. Miller

If you are an antique radio collector like I am, chances are good that you also collect old-time radio shows. I do, and among my favorites are the *Jack Benny Programs*. In one of his most famous routines, Jack was confronted by an armed hoodlum who demanded, "your money or your life". Silence. Hesitation. The aggravated robber shouts, "I said, 'your money or your life.'" Another long pause. Jack replied, "I'm thinking, I'm thinking."

A man's life and a man's money are about the two most important things he has to deal with during time on this earth. Asking for some of that money is serious business, and that is what the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association is doing now, on behalf of the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH. It is going to be a difficult task and it will require some hard work. I think I'm like most others — I really would rather not ask people for money. It's a tough assignment I'd sooner avoid.

Efforts to avoid this asking for money inspired some of us involved with the NOER project from the beginning to dream up a plan of "taxation". We thought it would be easy to tax every round of golf one cent. Purchasers of sod would pay an extra penny for each square yard they bought which would go to a fund to be used for building the NOER CENTER. Same with subscribers to lawncare services and landscape contracting. The idea, still valid to me, was that the end user of turfgrass research would pay for it. Although Tom Harrison and I could find no one to disagree with the concept, neither did we find a single person to initiate it. Some clubs (the same ones, always) tied their annual donations to the approximate rounds of golf for the year on their course or to the number of golfing members in the Club, but they'd have given the same amount to the WTA anyway.

What one must conclude is that this project will have to fall into the "voluntary giving" category. We are not go-

ing to be able to do as public officials and politicians can. Taxes won't work. Rather than suffering heartbreak, I am feeling some excitement about the prospect of having to go out and really earn this facility. We will not be able to pass off the responsibility of having to do it all ourselves. It is your business and mine.

I've yet to meet anyone in the golf turf area specifically and the turfgrass industry in general who doesn't recognize the need for the NOER CENTER. Agreement that this is a good project is widespread. However, wanting it and doing something about it are two different things. Our job will be to move good intentions into honest and generous responses.

There are two degrees of participation in the NOER project. Obviously, the first is giving (money). We all will have a chance to make a personal donation to the University of Wisconsin Foundation for this campaign. We hope, however, that giving will not become a substitute for more personal involvement of the WGCSA membership. "Doing" is that other degree of participation. It involves more than just writing a check; time and effort on behalf of the project are the contributions from doing.

For WGCSA members, a lot of that time and effort will be necessary to persuade the Clubs, owners and municipalities we work for of the importance of pledging to the UWF for the NOER CENTER. And I've always felt that to be a good persuader, you need to be a good teacher. Golfers may well enthusiastically embrace the NOER CENTER, once they know why quality research is important to golf courses in Wisconsin. We need to start not from our own positions or understanding but from the position of the golfer. With the help of the informational brochures developed by the WTA and the UWF and an intimate knowledge of what's best for golf, I expect great success in moving players to our point of view. Dialogue, conversation and the give-

and-take of opinions are our allies in this process. We won't be able to manipulate or force people into doing something about fulfilling the need for research. They have to see why it is important to them. Our job is providing that information.

Someone once said, "There are no free lunches." In this physical world we live in, you get nothing for nothing. You must drill through mud and rock and water to get oil; you have to break tons and tons of stone to get one small diamond. No labor, no fruits. It is that simple. Providing a quality golf course requires an enormous effort, usually on a daily basis. Coping, fighting and scarping with Mother Nature, however, makes the successful result even more sweet. We should not expect, therefore, that the NOER CENTER will be completed with little or no effort.

This business of raising money for the NOER CENTER is a tough assignment. Many of us have not tackled such a task before. But I've always felt that the WGCSA never shies away from something just because it is hard work. Collectively and individually, let's roll up our sleeves and get this job done.

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