



## Environmental Pro-activity

By Dean Musbach

With the winds of change blowing, the environmental movement is catching wind in its sails and thrusting forward into the next century. Every captain needs a competent navigator to guide his ship through hostile water or doom is certain. Knowing the final destination, the navigator can harness the wind and guide the ship to friendly waters.

In the recent election, President-elect Clinton and Vice President-elect Gore referred to the winds of change frequently, and for obvious reasons it seems fitting that they represent the winds of change in this analogy. The environmental movement represents the ship, and the legislatures and governmental agencies represent the captain. Who is the navigator? You guessed it; you are.

The point that I am trying to make is that as superintendents we can guide the environmental movement, and our actions can positively and negatively affect the outcome. We must become environmentalists, educating and promoting environmental awareness to everyone, especially to people in our profession.

It wasn't too long ago that when someone mentioned an environmentalist I pictured a bearded, long haired guy, wearing circular wire rimmed glasses, a tied dyed shirt, torn blue jeans and sandals, eating a granola bar, drinking unsweetened fruit juice, smoking a joint, and driving a Volkswagen camper-van with a "Better Red than Dead" bumper sticker. (If anyone reading this actually has or does resemble this stereotype, send Monroe a picture for his next quiz). The slightest thought of this environmentalist made me sick. The irony of the situation is that now I label myself as an environmentalist.

The environmental movement, dominated by extreme activists, is looking different today. The new players in the movement are more open minded and realistic about environmental issues. They realize that the environment needs to be protected, but not at any cost.

They realize that any environmental impact must be studied so the pros & cons can be examined. The positive effects should overwhelmingly outweigh the negative effects before interacting with the environment.

So, what can superintendents do? We need to be proactive at national, regional and local levels.

On a national level, GCSAA must continue its pro-active agenda in government regulation. If possible, this effort should be intensified. The GCSAA has done an excellent job educating its membership and affiliated chapters, but this needs to be expanded.

The GCSAA needs to reach more superintendents;—its educational resource is priceless and it's the best preventative medicine for our industry. If the proposed by-law changes get passed, the GCSAA will move quickly to create new membership classes that will attract superintendents that previously were excluded for economic reasons.

Currently in the northwoods, there are many superintendents that want to be members, but they aren't because they do not have expense accounts.

Although it is important that the GCSAA be accessible to all superintendents, I feel that the responsibility to educate rests more with the local chapters than with the national. GCSAA cannot address regional diversities as accurately or effectively as the local chapters. GCSAA should continue developing a national strategy, but the implementation needs to be accomplished at the local level.

Local chapters must take a pro-active approach to education, particularly environmental education. If a chapter is to be successful, it needs to reach every superintendent in its region. This should be the primary objective of the chapter.

As I stated earlier, many superintendents in the north lack professional affiliation for economic reasons. I know that some people say, "If you really care about your profession, a couple hundred bucks won't hurt you." My answer to this is, "Welcome to the real world!" I have a wife and four children who depend on me. If I have to choose between putting clothes on their backs or joining a superintendents association, my family will win—no contest.

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Fortunately I don't have to make this choice because my employer sees the importance of continuing education. Nonetheless, this is a serious problem and this is reality; the sooner we address it, the better off we'll be.

Local chapters need to develop creative membership promotions. Every superintendent within its region should be contacted. Having an attitude of "here it is, take it or leave it" is irresponsible and in the long run could be destructive. The free flow of information that occurs within an association benefits the individual, the chapter and the entire profession. Chapter officers need to be sales personnel promoting the benefits that the association offers; sending a membership application in the mail is not the solution.

Just think of the impact that an environmental incident carries; especially when it could have been prevented if John Doe superintendent at Tim Buck Tu C.C. had access to information openly shared at the local superintendents association. The media is not going to care whether or not the superintendent is a member of a professional association. They will be busy hanging dirty laundry, and that kind of negative publicity is detrimental to our profession.

It's easy to ignore the problem, to assume that superintendents are aware of environmental concerns by virtue of the position. This is a mistake. This reminds me of a saying that my dad used to tell me. "Never Assume because it will make an ass of you and me."

We cannot assume that superintendents are environmentally aware; if we do we are fooling ourselves and the damage that occurs will certainly be irreversible.

Like it or not, environmental concerns are in the public eye, and superintendents need to be environmental experts. The GCSAA must continue its pro-active approach to environmental regulation; furthermore, it needs to be more accessible to all superintendents, and it needs a well defined environmental strategy that can be implemented at a regional level.

Local chapters need to be proactively pursuing memberships and open dissemination of environmental information to people in this industry. If membership participation within a region is small and membership drives have failed, the local chapter should consider a blanket mailing pertaining to environmental issues.

Because golf is a recreational activity affecting the environment, our industry will be scrutinized first. What we do and how we are perceived is important. When someone says, "golf course

superintendent," the word "environmentalist" must come to mind. If we achieve this, it will be a great accomplishment for our profession. ♣

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## Monroe Country Club does some Damage in John Deere Tourney

By Tom Schwab

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Monroe Country Club made its mark in the national John Deere team golf championship. The event was held in Palm Springs, California on November 21 and 22.

The tournament took place on two extremely challenging golf courses—PGA West and La Quinta Dunes. The Wisconsinites rose to the occasion by being atop the leader board, tied with Texas, the first day. They had a 21 under total of 51 in their scramble format event.

The second day they faltered a little but still managed to card a 19 under 53. This effort gave them a third place finish out of 33 teams from throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The Monroe team of Superintendent Tom Schwab, Professional Mike Muranyi, Manager Tim Arndt, and President Steve Streff couldn't have done it without their fifth team member—John Deere representative Ed Witkowski. One example of his fine shotmaking was a 230 yard fairway two-iron shot to an island green.

Besides providing us with a great team member, everything else John Deere organized was great. All from the use of a Lincoln rental car, and a choice of great courses to on-course rules interpreters. The latter was needed when Schwab found himself with a broken putter half way through the second day. He found out he had to putt out the remaining holes with another club or use the broken putter. Fortunately he putted better with the broken club!

John Deere also provided a great platform, at the Saturday night banquet, for GCSAA president Bill Roberts to speak. He told about the many research projects the GCSAA has undertaken like the Cape Cod groundwater study and pesticide exposure study, all for the betterment of the game. In turn, John Deere presented GCSAA a \$12,000 donation to continue this important research. This was just one more way Deere made this a first class event. It all reflected their commitment to quality in the turf industry. ♣



WGCSA treasurer Tom Schwab shows unusually good form on this bunker shot.



From Left to Right: Tom Schwab, Mike Muranyi, Tim Arndt, Steve Streff, Ed Witkowski.