



My Thoughts on Afterthoughts

By Mark Kienert



"It'll never happen again!" Those were the words spoken to me by a former club president as he tried to explain, somewhat apologetically, for not having invited me to the club's invitational awards dinner. His embarrassment came as he overheard one the club's assistant golf pros ask me why he didn't see me at the reception last night. You automatically know my reply if you have been in this business for any length of time; you've probably been in a similar situation like this yourself. "I wasn't invited," was my simple reply. I recall a story of a former employer who was invited to a "black tie" affair on the same day of the event! Needless to say, he didn't go.

My ego is not as brittle as it once was, and I have started to catalog events that have occurred to me in my mind searching for simple omissions. I began to question why the green department was always the last to be informed. I'm sure it has something to do with the "trickle down" theory. Most clubs operate within committees and by the time the committee meets to finalize last minute details, they truly are last minute details. This forces most of us in the green department to scramble like mad, once again pulling the rabbit from the hat. Even as late as mid-summer last year, I walked into the pro shop and asked the question, "How come we have so many players on the course? We have a 9:00 o'clock shotgun, haven't we?"

The look on his face told me all I needed to know. "Oh my, I forgot to call you, didn't I?" The shotgun had been canceled due to a lack of interest and moved to a tee time format instead. Now I'm here to tell you that the golf pro here at Bull's Eye is one of my best friends. In all the activity of running his business, he forgot to tell me or anyone on my staff that the shotgun had been canceled. We were

prepared; the crew had reported early for work to get the job done. I do, however, have this fear that I will somehow overlook an important starting time and find our crew caught and cornered on the course without it being setup and ready for play.

If you have had this experience, you have been the victim of, as I like to call it, an "afterthought." As a tribute to our status as sometimes forgotten heroes of golf, I named my column in our clubs newsletter "Green Afterthoughts." It seems for some reason club department heads are the last to be included in the communication loop. Naming my column "Green Afterthoughts" was a bit of sarcasm on my part as I find most club newsletters to be woefully late in delivering timely communications to our memberships.

With that in mind, I began to search out new ways to communicate directly to our golfing membership. I placed important information up on

the bulletin board leading to both the men and women's locker room, thinking that would ease the problem. Like the late sixties song, "Signs, signs, everywhere a sign," these signs didn't produce the results I was after either. I recall the incredulous look I received from a board member whom stated that she never saw the aerification notice.

"It was hanging right next to where you post your handicap scores," I replied. "Oh! I never read those," she said. If you're like me, you have taken the steps of posting notices on locker room doors, clubhouse entrance doors and signs on the first and tenth tees. I have often thought it might take leasing the Goodyear blimp just to get my message across to the membership.

I know that public opinions are changing and have finally caught up with the times. In the January issue of "Golf Digest," a whopping 48 percent of golfers questioned in that survey
(Continued on page 5)



ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE GOLF SUPERINTENDENT

- Disposal of pesticides, fungicides, and hazardous wastes
- Free cost analysis for disposal of waste inventory
- Lab analysis for unknown substances
- Turnkey waste disposal includes waste profiles, labels, manifests, packaging, and transportation
- RCRA and DOT compliance
- 25+ years in the hazardous waste industry

Liesch Environmental Services, Inc.
6000 Gisholt Drive, Suite 203 • Madison, WI 53713
(608) 223-1532 • Fax (608) 223-1534

(Continued from page 3)

stated that the golf course superintendent was the single most important person in the game of golf. Forty-eight percent is decent, but we should not be satisfied with this number. In speaking with colleagues, we concluded almost universally that the percentage would not have been that high five years ago.

It is my belief that with this kind of recognition there is an underlining measure of responsibility that goes with our new found credibility. I hope you stand ready and accept the challenge when opportunity presents itself. Image is an important measure of this success. Education, hard work and a simple modicum of professionalism will carry many of us a long way. Imagine how I felt when I was told that the winner of the American Society of Golf Course Architects golf hole design contest donned a baseball cap as he received his award from Jack Nicklaus. Oh my! He should know that we are no longer weedpickers in bib overalls. Our attire has changed from T-shirts to golf shirts. Once thought of as "old Jake" down by the "barn," we are now known as golf course managers

in the maintenance center. I enjoyed a measure of success when the board of directors refers to our future maintenance building as the "Green Section Service Center."

Now, as golf course managers preparing for the twenty-first century, our jobs have become even more conspicuous in the way in which we conduct our everyday business lives.

We have raised the bar to a new level simply by our hard work and loyalties to the game and clubs that employ us. For myself, I know things have changed since I'm expected to be a part of a "let's talk golf" seminar that is to be held in May at our club. I still wasn't asked, but this time I knew that was expected to be there. This time I wasn't an afterthought. ♣



SPRING VALLEY®

Turf Products

ALL YOUR TURF PRODUCT NEEDS UNDER ONE ROOF



1-800-635-2123



Spring Valley fertilizers are made from quality products like Poly coated urea, Nutralene®, GSL® sulfate of potash and Milorganite®.

Fertilizers are screened and sized for uniform spreading.