



# Goals

By **David Brandenburg**, Golf Course Superintendent, Rolling Meadows Golf Course



Last issue I discussed how spring is a good time to initiate action to achieve new goals. I had mentioned two of my goals for 2003 were office organization and better crew communication. Those are the easy or small goals in my life. The big or hard goals are (1) learn to say no and, (2) leave work at the end of the day.

Learning to say no is a problem for me because I like to help people at home and at work. I am getting a little better but have a ways to go. I end up at meetings or events I do not need to attend. I also volunteer for things that others could do. I took the Steven Covey *7 Habits of Effective People* last year. Habit 3 is putting first things first. In other words, do what is important for you and eliminate what is not, both at home and work.

A good example of when I should have said no is the creek on our 17<sup>th</sup> hole. The pro and one of our customers who happens to run a landscape company wanted to add boulders and mini-dams to the grass bottom creek to make it look nice at no cost or labor to the golf course. (If something sounds too good to be true, it must be.) Well I knew this would

be an expensive and labor-intensive project because the rocks need to be placed, one by one, so they look like they have been there forever. I explained that to the contractor and they said they had done it before and not to worry.


Well they dumped some ugly white boulders into the creek and ran them over with a skid-steer to smash them into the creek-bottom. It was the worst looking thing I ever saw. After a weekend of regret, I decided to cancel the project when it was three-fourths done and James (the assistant) and I took the 30-ton of rock out by hand. Besides a learning lesson, I enjoyed the look on the contractor's face when I told them to go home. To add humor James also had a customer whom asked "do you guys take these rocks out of the creek every fall?" I have the picture of the project in my office with the words "just say no!" on it as motivation for the future.

It is helping because this spring I did say no to joining a third committee at the kids' school and I told the local extension office our staff could only roto-till part of the community garden. I also have fought off the customer volunteer projects on the golf course because they always turn out to be more work for our staff.

My other goal of leaving work at the end of the workday, not sunset, will be tough for me. I want to go home, but I love to work. I won't say I am a workaholic but others probably would. At most mid-level golf courses like ours, there is always something that needs doing, and I am happy to be doing it. Like many superintendents, I want the best course possible and try to exceed what our budget allows us to do by

doing extra myself. It is an ugly cycle that is hard to break. It also goes along with just say no. Many of us just need to say, "no we cannot do that because our budget does not allow that kind of labor."

Every time I plan on going home when the crew leaves, something comes up or that office work calls me, and before I know it, it's 6 pm. I am at the stage where Kayla and Andy are 10 and 8, respectively, and they are growing up. I need to get the heck out of here to do things with them and Noelle.

I think the deaths of Roberto and Luis at Hawks View GC stresses how short our lives may be. Many people can take care of our golf course when we are gone. But only we can take care of our families and friends. In the middle of this busy season take a moment to ponder this: life is short; spend it with those who are important to us. 

**Bayer** 

Agriculture Division

**Gardens & Professional Care**

**John Turner**

Field Sales Representative

**Bayer Corporation**

40 W 665 Campton Woods Drive  
Elburn, IL 60119

Phone: 630-443-7807

Fax: 630-443-7839

Voicemail: 888-242-4200

Extension: 3201

john.turner.b@bayer.com