



2002 WGCSA Spring Educational and Business Meeting

By *Dustin Riley*, Golf Course Superintendent, Oconomowoc Golf Club

The initial step to the 2002 golf season was taken as a good attendance of golf course superintendents, assistants and affiliates gathered at the Ramada Inn in Fond du Lac on Tuesday, March 5 for the annual Spring Education and Business Meeting. Many superintendent minds were placed at ease as snowfall totals nearing one foot blanketed the majority of Wisconsin several days earlier. Telephone calls from owners, members or the golfing public would be postponed for at least several days.

The educational portion of the

meeting was arranged through the GCSAA and its Superintendent Leadership Series. This year's speaker was Dr. Schwab. Dr. Patt Schwab is president of *FUNDamentally Speaking* and travels internationally inspiring audiences to use humor to gain control over change and adversity. She presented the morning educational session on the subject of "Dealing with Jerks – and Knee Jerk Reactions."

Her presentation revealed several effective hints for handling the conflicts and pressure induced by difficult people. Statements such as "The

easiest way to deal with a jerk; don't be a jerk yourself" or "Focus on the good things in life" are just a couple of her successful views. Dealing with jerks should not be avoided. "Blaming isn't changing! Wishing a frog would turn into a prince is a waste of your time. In dealing with jerks, your job is not to change them or get even with them. It is merely to get something productive out of the interaction."

Maintaining a positive attitude while addressing all concerns can be challenging. However, positively assessing and dealing with a negative

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situation or a professional relationship can produce enjoyable and rewarding results. While providing excellent solutions to various stressful situations, Dr. Schwab's quirky humor became more evident when class participants were awarded small trinkets such as mini plastic shovels, finger puppets and "froggies." Her antics proved that even the goofiest award could bring a smile and a positive reaction to the "hard core professional golf course superintendent."

Dealing with Jerks involves a seven-step plan. 1.) **Pre-empt 'em** by predicting problems before any arise. Selling the bad news with the good. Always make yourself accessible. Make people aware of any deal they receive. Thank people for seeking you out. Follow through with your end of any agreement. Develop a good evaluation system and use it. Keep yourself positive. 2.) **Assess the situation** by determining both views of a problem and what the options are. 3.) **Stop wishing the difficult person was different.** 4.) **Get some psychological distance between yourself and the difficult person.** 5.) **Formulate a coping strategy.** Describe what behavior you'd like changed and determine what needs to be said or done. 6.) **Implement your strategy.** Rehearse, anticipate their response, and keep working at it. Becoming fed up with jerks is a very human reaction - most people respond that way, which is why their behavior "works" at least in the short run. Deal with the problem in a friendly manner, but keep at it. 7.) **Monitor it.** In the end, do not be afraid to try a different approach if your first attempt doesn't produce the desired results.

The WGCSA Business meeting was called to order following lunch. President Brandenburg presented the meeting agenda and all areas were addressed. The meeting began with Dr. Geunhwa Jung commenting on his research plans for his snow

mold studies. Dr. Jung enthusiastically explained that Wisconsin appears to have many different strains of the turf disease. He also shared that research must continue to better understand these diseases.

Dr. John Stier discussed the completion of the three-year bentgrass study and explained the newly proposed research program for velvet bentgrass. This program will investigate the potential future of velvet bentgrass as a primary golf course turf. Dr. Stier also provided an information update concerning the status of NR 151. Kevin Hensler was introduced as the new UW-Madison staff member hired to lead the development of an Integrated Turf Management program to assist golf course superintendents and other turf managers affected by the DNR's nonpoint pollution control Rule NR151. Kevin will be developing an ITM manual helping turf managers develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) for proper justification of turf inputs such as fertilizer, chemicals, etc. Although the regulations of NR 151 may be several years away, preparations are beginning.

All committee chairmen presented their reports and the expectations for the upcoming season. The 2002 budget for the WGCSA was presented, explained and approved. The new budget explained the rising costs of all association expenses. In order to continue funding turfgrass research while operating effectively and efficiently, a membership dues increase was proposed and passed. The dues increase will be the first in more than 10 years. The membership dues will increase to \$140.00. Class "E" membership will increase to \$240.00. The membership annual dues increase will begin 2003.

Following the Business Meeting the WGCSA Masters Drawing produced the following selections: James Hasz, Brent Amann, Steve Bailey, Marc Schwaarting, John Gallus, and John Hegge. First alternate is Mark Kienert. Second alter-

nate is Chad Ball. Enjoy the trip to Augusta National gentlemen!

Congratulations to Monroe Miller for his continued success with *the Grass Roots* publication. Monroe was recognized for his efforts as the editor. *The Grass Roots* has been awarded **Best Publication** by a volunteer editor for the 18th consecutive year. The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendent Association is privileged to have members, like Monroe Miller, who are willing to donate the time, effort and passion for the benefit of the Association.

Congratulations also to Dr. John Stier. Dr. Stier was awarded the Pound Extension Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Pound Extension Award is given annually to an outstanding early career Extension faculty member in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The award is in honor of Glenn Pound, a former faculty and Dean/Director of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The monthly meeting notices will soon be arriving. Please consider participating in these events and getting involved with the association. Have a great season. ♣

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