

Looking (and Acting) the Part

By Bruce Schweiger, Reinders, Inc.

It is amazing how time moves on and the next thing you know, twenty-five years have passed. I am talking about all the years I have been involved with the WGCSA as a student, a superintendent and a vendor. It does not seem like that long ago and our association was in a battle with our employers and golfers to be recognized as golf course superintendents and not just greenkeepers. We needed respect because we knew without respect we would not be considered professionals.

That brings me to my point. We have spent many years attempting to show the world that we are professionals and deserving of pay and respect equal to that as golf pros and clubhouse managers. Then you attend one of our monthly meetings and watch a lot of the good we have done being dismantled before your eyes.

If you have attended any meetings in the recent past you have to agree that these meetings are not much more than a chance to play golf. I would like to look at

our last meeting at Grand Geneva Resort. We had between forty and fifty people show up for the education and eighty-eight people to play golf. This is an excellent facility that treated us to a grand day. If you had happened to be a staff member working that day, what kind of an opinion would you have had of our association after we left?

We had a luncheon speaker who gave his time to share with us his experience with the Audubon Society. The schedule that we each were sent clearly stated that education started at 11:00 a.m. I was there at 11:00 and we had a handful of attendees ready for his talk. It took at least fifteen minutes for the group to arrive. Mr. Leuzinger had to adjust his talk so as to not put the day behind schedule. What kind of respect did our association extend to Mr. Leuzinger, a retired fellow golf course superintendent from Illinois? Do you think he will be back in Chicago telling everyone what a great day he had



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with the WGCSA, or will he talk about the country bumpkins who cannot even make a meeting on time? Do you suppose he was impressed by those who preferred to work on their swing or putting stroke instead of listening in to what he had to say?

I have had the task of finding speakers for this group and others, and I know they are very hard to find. Then to have half of the attendees for the day show up after his talk but in time for lunch shows considerable impoliteness. And it doesn't make the education chairman's job any easier.

What about the footnote on every meeting notice we receive that says APPROPRIATE GOLF ATTIRE REQUIRED? We were playing at Grand Geneva Resort; the APPROPRIATE ATTIRE would be that of any country club and NOT blue jeans. Blue jeans do not make the grade at an excellent facility like this one. If we have a question as to what would be appropriate attire, please check the Sunday afternoon television and see what the golf pros are wearing - a golf shirt and slacks. In the summer, mid-thigh length shorts are acceptable.

We have some of the finest golf facilities in the nation right here in Wisconsin and as a group it would be great to play some of these. But what superintendent would take the chance that his peers would arrive for the day in violation of the basic dress code of the host club or facility? As I look at the schedule of meetings for the

year, I applaud Dave Smith, Marc Davison, Dave Braasch, Randy Witt and Michael Lee for hosting a meeting. I hope they don't experience the dress code problems I witnessed at Grand Geneva. For our association, I hope we can put a better foot forward. Remember folks, that means when you are eating lunch or dinner, please take off you hat.

How do we fix this problem? We must remember that we are professional people and act like accordingly. We expect the respect normally accorded to professions like banking and law and must conduct ourselves as though we deserve it. Let's be proud of what we do and who we are and act accordingly. If we cannot do this without policy and procedures from our board of directors, then I suggest we make every meeting a coat and tie affair. Those not able to make it for the education or who choose not to attend should be billed a \$20 surcharge. After two such surcharges, maybe we should limit your involvement. I have a busy schedule too and can be late; these should be our exceptions and not our norms.

Lastly, who had the super-sized bag of sunflower seeds? Maybe shells on the course are not that bad, but we could really tell how far from the pin you hit your approach shot and I think our group was keeping track of the number of putts you took. Please don't tell; we would not want to see a job opening after the next meeting! ♣



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