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MESSAGE SWITCHING

by Dr. Alma S. Baron,
University of Wisconsin—Madison

"What you are screams so loudly I cannot hear what you say."

American poet Henry W. Longfellow wrote those words more than a hundred years ago, long before body language became a popular subject. Longfellow's message is clear: your body sometimes contradicts your words. When you send mixed messages to the people you manage or the members of your club, you confuse and frustrate them. In many cases, you contribute directly to substandard performance and misinterpretation of your meanings. You needn't cause these problems. On the contrary, you can ensure you don't cause them by periodically taking a "body check"—a look at your nonverbal signals.

Starting at the Top

During normal conversational contact with others, the first thing you look at is the other person's face. You have been trained to look there for signs of recognition and approval. The face conveys messages far out of proportion to its size. In fact, the face sends the most potent and easily recognized messages. Can you remember having been shattered by some devastating look on the face of your mother, a favorite teacher or friend?

When I suggest starting your body check at your head, I want you to make certain your face isn't contradicting your words. For example, in our culture, eye contact is very important during conversation as a method of conveying sincerity. If you want the person with whom you are talking to believe you, you must maintain eye contact. And if you are the listener in the conversation, eye contact demonstrates your interest, proves your attention and substantiates your comprehension.

If you speak to or listen to another while examining the tips of your shoes, then you're miscommunicating—sending one message with words and another with your face. If you are busy, it is far more considerate that you tell the

other person rather than giving less than full attention. Simply say, "I most postpone this interview (or conversation) for a time until I can meet with you. Can we reschedule?" If it is an emergency, put aside what you're doing, and listen totally.

Other facial features which may be contradicting your verbal messages are your mouth and your eyebrows. Are you smiling at the same time you're attempting to correct and criticize? Are you frowning disapproval while patting a subordinate on the back verbally? Have you wrinkled your eyebrows demonstrating concern while uttering those, "Things are going well" words? If you are, you are probably being misunderstood.

Let your face support the words you are using. With members, as well as employees, mixed messages can be devastating. If you don't like what the member is saying, you are entitled to explain your feelings; if you do approve, express it with an open look and smile.

Check Your Body Space

Human use of territory is fascinating. You move within prescribed boundaries. Think about how people's use of space has affected you. When someone tailgates you on the road, you feel they have invaded your territory. When someone enters your office and stands just inside the door, you think they're being timid. Your sitting at your desk, instead of getting up and inviting them in, enforces that timidity.

As you begin to understand how people use space, you see cues to attitude and meaning. For example, have you ever approached an employee and had him/her back away from you? If this has happened, it happened because you violated that person's body space.

The movement away from others elicits feelings of rejection universally, unless you explain why you are altering the distance. And keep this point in mind the next time you approach an employee for a conversation.

In a business environment, standing three to four feet from the other person while conversing is normal. First, this distance allows you to talk without being easily overheard. Second, it is a socially accepted and standard way of talking. By the way, standing closer to or further from also sends messages. Too close sometimes connotes sexual invasion; too far connotes hostility or aggression. When you talk, check your distance; avoid invading or ignoring the other's territory.

Another universal message in our culture is the one communicated by the movement towards another. If, indeed, you do not move out of your space as someone moves toward you, you have accepted the friendly gesture and countered it with one of your own.

An interesting characteristic of space usage is that people in our culture construe as arrogance or aggression the fact that you don't leave your space, but rather you expect others to walk into it. Here you are demonstrating that you always want to be in the command position of either accepting or rejecting the gestures of others.

The way you use your body space says a great deal about the way you think of yourself and a great deal about the way others will think about you. If you are willing to share your space with others, you demonstrate openness that speaks volumes. If you won't or can't share your space, you convey a message of rejection or dissatisfaction with others.

Remember, as a manager, you have position status over your subordinates. You may not think this exists, but it is a fact always in the minds of your subordinates. To rid yourself of that status barrier, you must advance into the territory of your subordinates, as much as is comfortable for them.

One closing point on the issue of body space is the fact that people form body space usage habits at very young ages. And frequently, we do not understand our space

usage habits. Neither are we cognizant of the fact that these habits, these behavior patterns we formed as children, transmit messages—they communicate. Our objective as managers must be to attempt to ensure that we are not sending mixed messages to our subordinates or our members.

People protect their spaces because they feel more comfortable in them. If you wish to give the employee the benefit of the doubt in a situation, or if you wish to convey a feeling of camaraderie, go to the employee's space. If on the other hand, you are going to discipline, go to a neutral territory, neither yours nor the employee's office. Choosing a neutral territory removes the space barrier to effective communication and allows both of you to concentrate on the issue at hand.

If a member comes to your office, always rise and greet him. This avoids the issue of "your space" and makes it neutral. You can change the whole dynamics of understanding in your conversations if you become sensitive to space usage.

Watch Your Gestures

Gestures are tricky things. As a matter of fact, there are no real, universal gestures. Not only do gestures differ from culture to culture, but also they differ geographically within a culture. The only universal thing which can be said about a gesture is: If you gesture openly, toward another person, open palms, arms out, you have made a friendly gesture.

The term "up tight" refers to the way the body is held when someone refuses to relax. It translates into coldness, hostility.

Gestures change with situations. Sometimes a gesture can be used to convey anger. At other times the same gesture communicates enthusiasm. Your ability to understand a gesture and to relate it to the context of the situation in which it was used improves your ability as a communicator.

The important point is to recognize that gestures too may be in conflict with the words you are sending to your employees. Be cognizant of the fact and take steps to guard against accidental misunderstandings.

Postures, Too, Portend

The way you stand, sit or in general hold yourself during a con-

versation sends signals to your audience. And posture too has some cultural signal differences. In the Orient, standing erect and at attention when talking with others is a gross mark of disrespect. A sign of respect during conversation in Japan is dropping your head slightly down. If someone in the United States dropped his head while conversing we would interpret the action as a sign of weakness or as a sign of indifference to us and our words. We read posture this way: When you stand straight up you're not just doing what mother taught you to do, you're also giving the impression of being alert, ready for action and full of energy. Whenever your head dips or drops to one side, you convey a message of a loss of confidence.

Final Points

Briefly, we've touched on several body movements which send messages. It is essential we understand our bodies and understand that bodies convey messages that may undermine our verbal messages. This body language is our emotional

language; our verbal language is our logical language. The emotional part of our communication is always more easily read by others with whom we communicate. Sometimes, in fact, our emotional language gives us away.

Try to get control of your emotional language. The messages your body sends control the messages others send back to you. It's easy for you to control your body language once you know what it means.

In today's working world, the bottom line in communication is honesty. Sometimes you may think you have been honest, but your body may have sent a different message. I urge you to try to make your non-verbal cueing consistent with your words. And, I'm convinced the best way to start the process is by taking periodic body checks.

Editor's Note: Dr. Alma Baron is a professor at the Management Institute, University of Wisconsin Extension in Madison. She and her husband, Lee, have been members of Blackhawk Country Club for the past 15 years. This article will also appear in Vol. 1 No. 4 of the CMAA Badger Broadcast, edited by Bernd Sturm.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS & DIRECTORS ANNOUNCED

The WGCSA Nominating Committee has announced the following slate of candidates for office:

President Bill Roberts
Vice-President Roger Bell
Secretary Rod Johnson

Treasurer Bruce Worzella
Director Carl Grassl
Director Randy Smith

The election will take place at our November meeting.

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WGCSA "FUNNY PAPERS"!

GREAT THOUGHTS ON GRASS AND GOLF COURSE CARE

From Gerald Kloss, by way of Jim Latham, come some slightly amended notable quotes:

When someone asked, "Why, Socrates, is your golf course so crumbly" I reply, "Why isn't yours?"

Socrates

There is nothing truer to the spirit of the Third Reich than maintaining a healthy, weed-free golf course. As you irrigate, weed and fertilize your grass, repeat to yourself, "This golf course will last a thousand years!"

Adolf Hitler

If there is one final warning I would give my fellow citizens on leaving the presidency of this new republic, it would be this: Avoid the tyranny of grass tending. Fix your eyes on the stars, not on the *Poa annua*.

Washington's Farewell Address

And from the mischievous pen and sketch pad of Gene Haas comes another "Player's Perspective!"

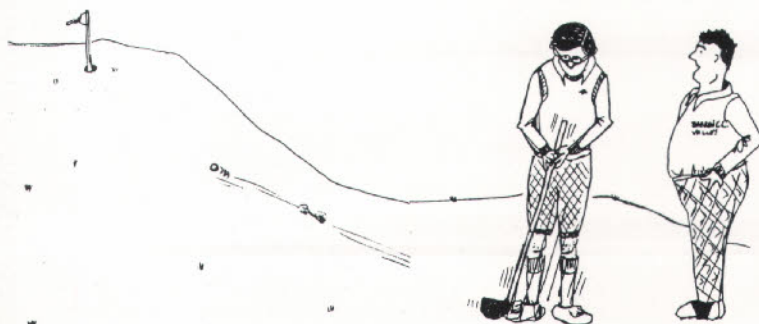


"FAST GREENS;
A REPLY TO
YOUR EDITOR
July 10, 1985

COCKSON SCORES AGAIN!



From an anonymous Superintendent comes this thought about the "no win" situation we frequently find ourselves in when it comes to "fast" greens:



These greens are so damn slow — I'll bet they don't stimp 20.
GRASS? WHAT'S GRASS?

As a conqueror, I have always followed one rule in deciding whether to invade and pillage a given country: Does it pride itself on its green golf courses? If so, horses away! It will fall like a ripe plum, for a nation of grass growers would rather bear a sprinkler than a sword.

Attila the Hun

Yes, I have been accused of many kinky things in my life, but no one can take away my secret pride — I raised great turf. There is nothing so tickling to the senses of a true voluptuary as running barefoot through lush grass and then beating helpless maidens with a birch rod. I hope I will be remembered as the first and greatest SODdist.

Marquis de Sade

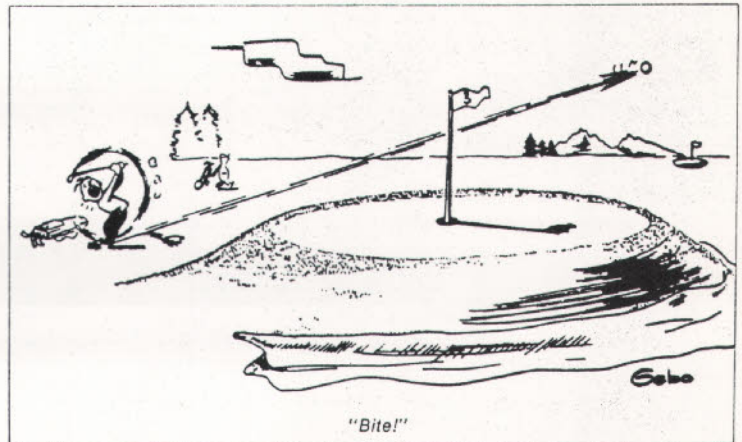
Keep Off the Grass.

Sign outside the Kremlin

"To water or not to water; that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous lightning or to take arms against impending wilt, and by watering, end it."

William Shakespeare

Here's what some golfers expect from their Golf Course Manager — a five iron shot from 40 yards should hold!



Reprinted from THE BEST OF GOLF DIGEST — The First 25 Years, page 210, with permission from Ms. Delores Siletto of Golf Digest, Inc.



The Working Superintendent

And from Suzie Bell comes the following perceptive sketch, with the remark "North Shore Golf Club employee hard at work (or is that Roger?)!"



WISCONSIN TURFGRASS NEWS

AN INVITATION TO ATTEND

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The 1985 WTA golf outing will be hosted by Tom Harrison. The \$50 registration fee (\$60 for non-members) includes lunch, golf, hors d'oeuvres, dinner and prizes. The golf cars available are limited to 35, and will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. They are included in the registration for the first 70 registrants.

Pre-registration is required and the fee must accompany the registration form. The deadline is September 23. Informal attire is appropriate for the entire day. Cocktails and refreshments will be available from a cash bar.

Those interested in dinner but not golf are welcome to attend for \$25.

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Organization _____

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No. of Persons

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Frame On Management SELECTION

By Ron Frame

In the most recent published column, we discussed the employment process and identified its parts — selection, induction, retention and termination. The next few issues will examine each of these parts in sufficient detail to provide a global view of effectiveness in this general area of the management of people and, perhaps by implication, suggest ways in which the process can be made to work for the person with the responsibility for effectiveness — the superintendent.

Every superintendent realizes that sooner or later the process of effectively managing his subordinates is of great personal importance; any employee has the capacity to make the superintendent look good, just as the opposite is true. The superintendent's professional success is largely wrapped up in his ability to get things done THROUGH the crew at some appropriate standard of quality. It is a personal and serious matter; knowing turf isn't enough. He must know and do the management of people effectively. It is his job, at least a very important part of it.

Of course, managing people isn't all of it. The superintendent must also manage "things" — equipment, materials, supplies — and the typical superintendent (perhaps the typical human being) often is more comfortable with "thing" management than with people management. Things tend to be more predictable than people. Things don't think, communicate, rationalize, procrastinate or carry with them a notion of residue resulting from living two-thirds of their day in other settings populated with myriad other people, needs and pressures.

While even a brief comparison will prove that the human resources available to the superintendent's job are much more expensive than physical resources, it is generally true that more real dollars go into the selection and maintenance of "thing" resources than those that are human.

We easily accept the need to ponder purchases of equipment to

make well-informed, cost effective, goal supportive decisions. We look not only at quality of manufacture and functional efficiency but also at operating costs and maintenance requirements. Such processes may require many hours of reading, discussion, observation, computation and thought over the course of weeks or months. The resultant decision may result in an expenditure of \$25,000 or \$30,000 on a machine that has a life expectancy of 5 to 7 years, a terminal value of \$2,000 to \$4,000 and in-between maintenance costs equalling 40% of its original purchase price.

True, the machine is predictable; its behavior is mostly a known quantity. It will nearly always start, will go where steered and will cut at a breadth and height desired. And, when not doing these things, it will set quietly between its yellow-painted lines and be of no bother. That's nice.

But also true, it can never do more than a very limited number of tasks, and it can never perform its work better than when new and broken-in. Indeed, its functional deterioration begins the moment it is first used. A hand mower can never be trained and developed and grown to become a five-gang fairway mower. And none of that equipment, no supplies or materials, no physical resource will perform unless a human causes it to happen.

Productivity on the course requires the wisdom in the expenditure of dollars for desired results from both the human and the physical resources. Let's now turn to some ideas about cost effectiveness in human resource management.

SELECTION

Management (cost) effectiveness starts when the selection process is initiated. In fact, effective management must be in place and evident prior to the selection process — a way of thinking that shows in the way things are done and attitudes are displayed. It may be seen in a sense of shared purpose, of involvement, of caring about the course condition and appearance on the part of all existing staff.

But, from the perspective of the job candidate, it does start with the selection process. That which

goes on between the candidate and the superintendent (and staff) in the selection process sets the tone for the boss/subordinate, employer/employee relationship for a significant period of time into the future. First and early impressions are important, and they work in both directions. The superintendent has some control over those impressions the candidate receives and should be sensitive to them.

Additionally, it must never be forgotten that, upon selection (at time of hire), not only has the candidate been selected for employment, the course (company, club, organization) has been selected as an employer by the candidate. It may seem that one side proposes, and the other accepts, but the reality is that, like marriage between two people, each selects the other. The degree to which each selection decision is an informed decision has a great deal to do with the success of the relationship.

How to generate informed decisions? Remember, we are dealing with people — not iron — and pretty, data-filled brochures are not available, nor are opportunities (most often) to observe the resource at work.

Informed decisions come from information and the resources for information are limited to the candidate and the employer; the various repositories of each can only be effectively revealed through a communication process. Central to that process are the job application, the interview procedure and ancillary follow-up activities.

We will deal with these and related matters in the next column.

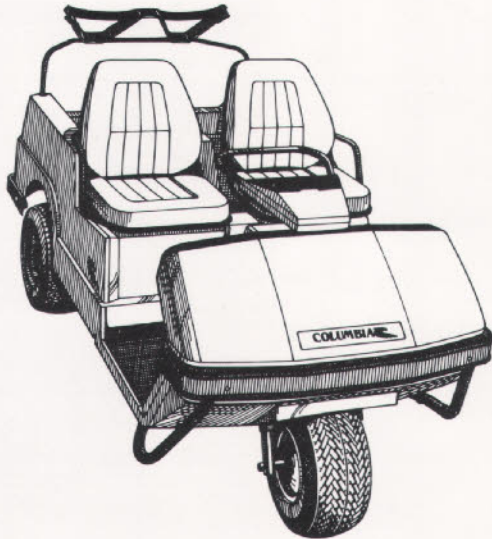
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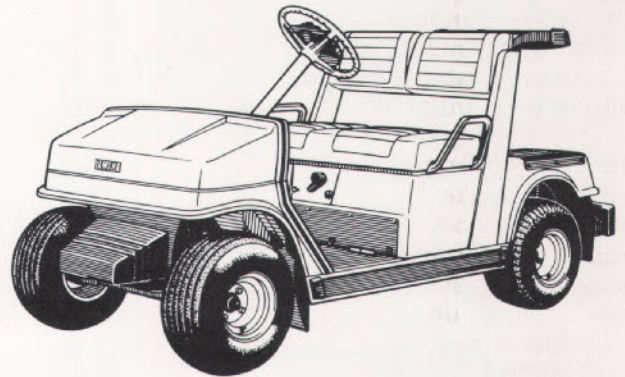
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Thank you,

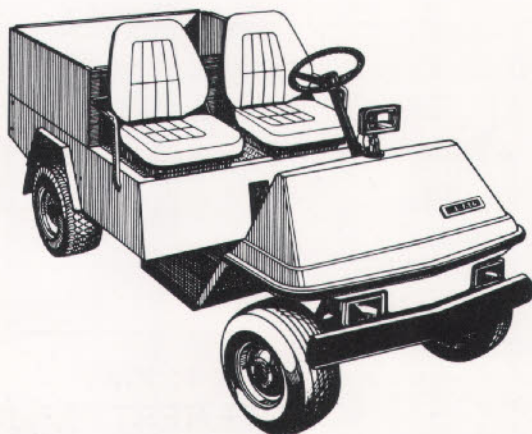
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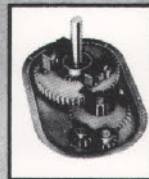
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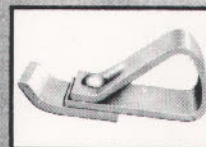
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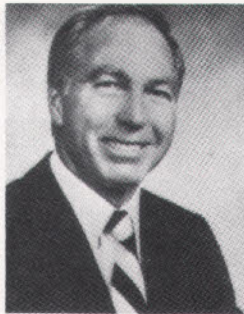
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**BART STARR
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Bart Starr, former quarterback and coach of the Green Bay Packers and a longtime member of the Oneida Golf and Riding Club, will give the keynote address at the Luncheon Banquet of the GCSAA Mid-Year Turfgrass Conference and Show. The show, scheduled for September 19-24, will be held in Indianapolis.

Starr is a serious golfer and in

addition to membership at Oneida, managed by Randy Witt, he has played golf at many of the golf courses around Wisconsin. He is a leader and a motivational speaker and definitely takes something special to the Indianapolis conference. Under Green Bay Packer coach Vince Lombardi, Bart became the winningest quarterback ever to play the game and he still holds several NFL records. In addition to a career in football as a player and as a coach, Starr is also a successful business executive.

Lombardi was so impressed by Starr that he once said of him, "To me, Bart Starr stands for what the game of football stands for: courage, stamina, and coordinated efficiency. Also vitality and enterprise, for he is not only the MVP in the NFL, but also a very fine man."

Starr is considered a warm and dignified human being who is keenly aware of his public role. He feels that he and all men in the public eye have a great deal of responsibility to society. He lives this role by dedicating many hours of his time and traveling thousands of miles to speak to audiences about a charity in which he is actively involved, Rawhide.

Rawhide is a Wisconsin home for disadvantaged youngsters.

Bart's connection with golf and the WGCSA goes another step. He is Chairman of the Vince Lombardi Memorial Golf Tournament at North Hills Country Club each year which was highlighted in the last issue of THE GRASSROOTS.

For more information on the Mid-Year Conference and registration, call the GCSAA toll-free at 1-800-GSA-SUPT.



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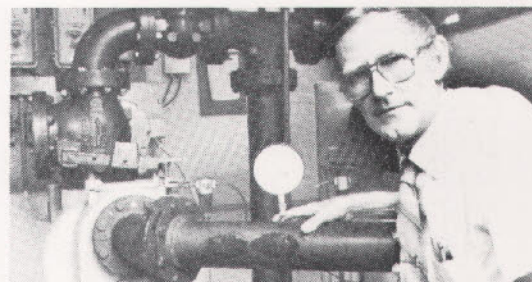
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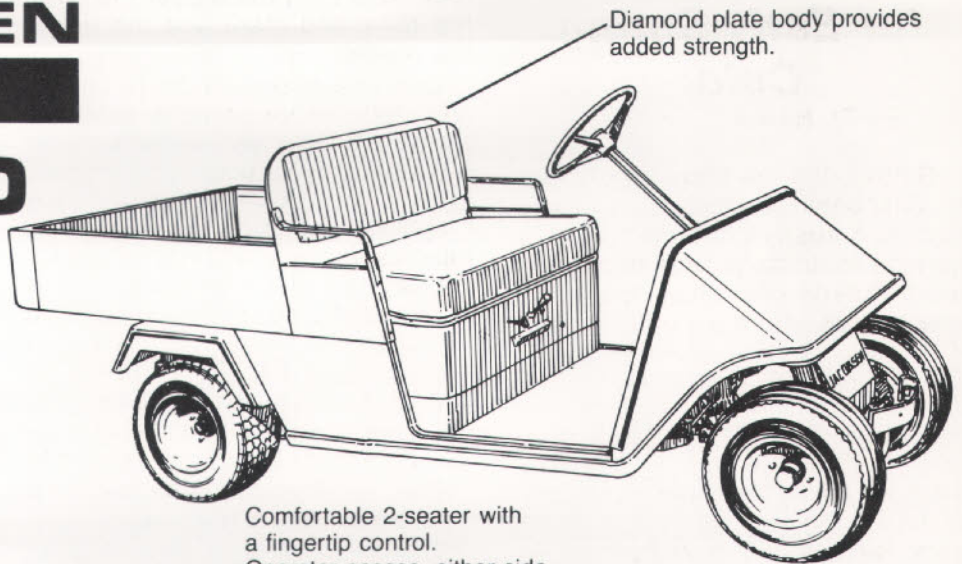
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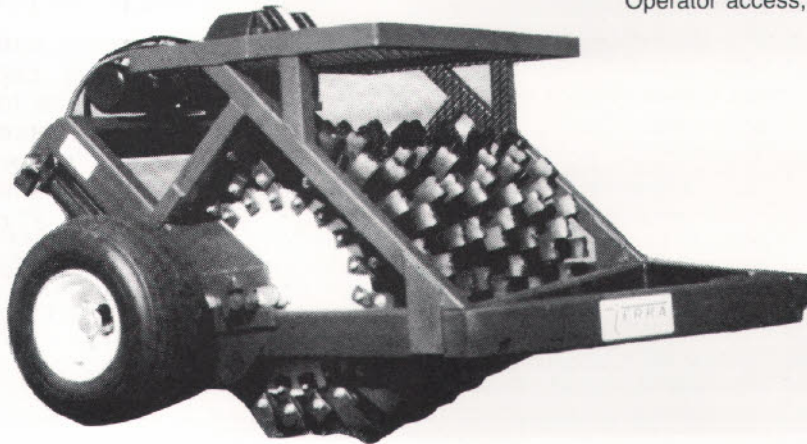
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