



# SHOPBLINDNESS

By Monroe S. Miller

During the oil crisis of the early 1970s, a lot of effort went into forging an energy consciousness in this country. Citizens turned thermostats down, automakers started to build something other than gas guzzlers and energy efficient furnaces came into the marketplace. They all worked.

There were a lot of gimmicks, too. Few worked. In an effort to get people to turn lights off when they left a room, I think 90% of the light switches in Wisconsin had a yellow "TURN LIGHTS OFF" sticker on or beneath them.

After a while nobody, and I mean nobody, saw the message. The stickers merely became part of the "landscape".

That principle, I am sad to say, follows into too many of our golf course shops and shop yards.

I call it shopblindness.

Shopblindness is a syndrome that causes the guilty to become blind to messes, clutter and disarray in the shop and shop yard.

The principal rule of shopblindness is that few things are ever put in their rightful place. Trash, broken equipment, parts and hundreds of other things stay where they were last used. Within weeks, they are never noticed again. They become part of the scenery. And the scenery is ugly.

It is always amazing to observe that some of those with the most serious cases are yet able to find almost anything they need, due apparently to a photographic memory. However, sending a rookie into such massive disorganization is committing him to a hopeless search.

What is saddest is that if the superintendent has shopblindness, it doesn't take long before the entire crew catches it. The office is in disarray and so is the lunchroom. Usually the restrooms are gross and the work bays are barely navigable.

The situation commonly spreads outside, creating a miserable sight of unmaintained weeds growing up around

and through old equipment, lumber, brush, wood chips, irrigation pipes and fittings, and course construction materials.

Although it isn't always true, sometimes shopblindness sneaks out onto the golf course. Projects are not quite finished off, tree stumps rot before they are cut, stump holes may be filled but never seeded, and the pothole in the cart path isn't fixed. The shortcomings also become part of the golf course scene.

Shopblindness, I think, infects every golf course superintendent at one time or another. Sometimes, during the heat of the summer battle, shop conditions get ahead of all of us on occasion.

It is also more difficult to keep order when there are twenty employees than when there are less than half that. And as any parent of a teenager will testify, kids that age are almost universally sloppy. We employ a lot of teenagers!

I know that shopblindness had me in its grasp in the early years. We simply invested every spare minute on the golf course itself. That is understandable, even somewhat justifiable.

What's not, however, is year in and year out, inside and outside, the chaos we see too often. Unfortunately, the same thing is seen in farmsteads. Some are neat and clean and fresh looking, some are not. Obviously our business is not the only one with such problems.

There are lots of reasons for working to overcome the seemingly hopeless situations in some of our golf course shops. Well organized operations are inherently more efficient. Daily operations run more smoothly. Employees are certainly more comfortable and probably happier in a neat environment than in the midst of a mess. Good shop habits, in terms of organization and neatness, are also used on the golf course itself.

The most persuasive reason for cleaning up and overcoming shopblindness may be the old principle of "first impression". The value of a favor-

able impression—first or otherwise—on owners, members, players and everybody else has been well proven.

I also believe that your shop and shop surrounds speak loudly to your personal pride. It takes very little pride to work in, around and through an embarrassing mess.

It's been a long winter; many of us are well along with winter equipment work. This just may be the winter that presents a perfect opportunity to face up to shopblindness and do something about it.

That would go a long way toward making it the freshest start to a season ever.

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## "SETTING PRIORITIES"

By Steven M. Cook  
Superintendent Golf de Joyenval

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This issue's feature might better be titled "From Around The World" and the article itself called "Ne Vous Inquiétez Pas, Soyez Heureus". Steven Cook writes here about his experience as a golf course superintendent in France, and compares it with what he has known here in America. Steven worked in the Chicago area golf course industry.

This excellent piece appeared in the December 1991 (Volume 45, No. 7) issue of THE BULL SHEET, official publication of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents of the Greater Chicago Metropolitan Area, and is reprinted here with permission from THE BULL SHEET's long time and very personable editor, Fred Opperman.

Fred told me of a call he received from Steven about the article. The call was from France and Fred was travelling one of Chicago's freeways (tollway, more likely!). He took the call on his cellular phone. Now that's high technology!

Read and enjoy Steven's experiences of "Que sera sera" in France. And remember, if you give that approach a try here in the U.S., you'll be searching for employment in France in less than a month's time!

Thanks to AJM for translations:

1. Don't worry, be happy, and
2. Whatever will be, will be.

After reading articles by GCSAA director Bruce Williams and GCSAA president Stephen Cadenelli concerning the utilization of our spare time, I couldn't help but compare the French attitude with our own concerning family and personal time.

It seems this advice always surfaces in mid-summer when stress peaks for

most golf course superintendents. But not for the French. This advice will surface at any time day or night, summer or winter, wet or dry. They put family, friends and the enjoyment of life ahead of all other priorities. In fact, there is no other priority.

If you ask a French "Intendant de Parcours" whether he will be at the golf course on the coming weekend or in the country with his family, no doubt about it... he will not be on the first tee. Even those who are single and without a wife and children will be with their parents and friends every chance they get.

The point is: they make their chances. None of this "I've got to be at the course today or something will go wrong."

Think about it. There are courses here in Europe older than the United States, and they are still here, after all these years, after all those superintendents, they're still here. Time off or long hours at the course, they're still there.

And who knows the difference? Their families and friends know. Oh, yes, there are those of us who will say, "we are more dedicated than they, more professional, harder working, and American members demand higher quality."

This may be true. But after all those years the courses are still there! Still being played. Still being maintained. Still being watered.

You won't find too many French su-

perintendents with a stress problem, unless he's trying to choose a good wine. I'm not saying this outlook is right or wrong, good or bad. But it works for them and after all these years their courses are still there!

Most people can't believe it when they discover the hours an American superintendent works. In France if you work extra long hours, you are allowed by law to recuperate those same hours in the off season, which means you may be looking at somewhere around two months of rest and relaxation before the next season starts! When they get back, that's right, the golf course is still there.

I think that most of us will always be working those incredible hours. Our drive toward excellence demands it. It is one of the things that makes our country so unique and strong, along with giving us the greatest golf courses in the world.

But there must be a middle ground between these two philosophies. There must be a way to find the time. While I personally don't hold to the French idea of "it can wait 'til tomorrow", I have learned one thing here. That is that life is short, spare time important, and the weekends spent travelling are much more memorable than those spent at the golf course.

And when I come back Monday morning... the course is still there!

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Compiled by Larry Lennert

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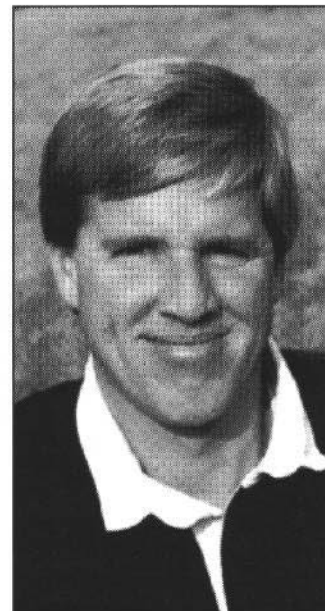
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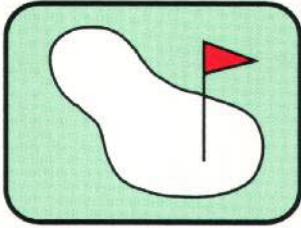
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# First Impressions

By Chad Eberhardt

The moment I had been looking forward to was rapidly approaching. After some 8 hours of I-55 pavement pounding, Monroe and I were finally exiting onto I-10.

I-10 represented the final leg of an 18-hour journey to my first GCSAA Conference and Show. As we passed over this wooded bayou and marshland country, I continued to suppress my high expectations.

I refused to set myself up to be disappointed. It was going to be very difficult for the 8-day event to measure up to all the hype I had previously read and heard.

Upon our arrival to New Orleans, Monroe and I were greeted by a torrential rainfall. Traffic barely crept along. The Crescent City was not greeting us with a smile and open arms as advertised. By the time we reached the Sheraton, the rain came to an abrupt halt.

After a trouble free check in, we decided to get a feel for the city. We headed straight for Bourbon Street. As many of you know, Bourbon Street is the strip in more ways than one. The blare of country competes with traditional Dixieland jazz. A person can find just about anything and everything here.

The people of New Orleans are one of a kind. New Orleans is known as "The City that Care Forgot." The people here contend, "Care didn't forget, we chose to ignore it." That says it all!

The Opening Session's 5:15 p.m. start time was nearing. Monroe and I decided to head over to get a good seat. I'm glad we did. The place was packed!

Once the festivities got rolling, a strong sense of pride began to build up inside of me for our profession. We owe a lot to Chet Mendenhall, Tuck Tate, and George Kozelnicky for their outstanding contributions.

I can't even begin to put into words how proud I felt when "The Grass Roots" was awarded for Best Original Editorial Content. Congratulations to Monroe for another year of hard work to put out only the best!

By the time Terry Bradshaw came to the podium, I had enough pride penned up inside of me to go around the room. There was absolutely no room for inspiration. Not even from the most effective motivational speaker.

But, Bradshaw did it! He inspired me beyond belief. I wanted to jump out of my seat, run all the way home, and begin the best season Blackhawk C.C. has ever seen!

Everybody I talked to, later that evening, informed me that it only gets better. "Yeah right! I'd be satisfied if we left tonight," I'd respond.

Even though I was able to jot down some useful notes, I was disappointed with Friday's educational sessions. I find it much more educational to hear fewer speakers give longer presentations. Twenty minutes per speaker is only enough time to present an outline of a topic.

The disappointment that I felt earlier was heavily outweighed by the Environmental General Session. This session was another highlight of the week. Jay Feldman, John Stossell, and Victor Kimm effectively presented a highly entertaining, thought provoking, and educational performance.

Even after the Environmental Session, I was still being told that the best was yet to come ... The Trade Show.

The 9:00 a.m. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony came soon enough for me the next morning. Once that green duct tape dropped, the mass of people rushed to the center of the Convention Center. "For what?" I asked. "For a hat, you fool!" they responded. It was similar to what it must be like at the annual "Running of the Bulls" in Pamplona, Spain. Every person for themselves!

Once I got my hat, I felt lost. Where do you start? How can you see it all? How many millions of dollars is this worth? This is absolutely unbelievable!

After wandering aimlessly for hours, I decided to get organized. My goal was to see everything. Needless to say, the majority of remaining time was spent on

the trade show floor.

By Monday, I was thoroughly impressed and exhausted. It seemed like I had walked for over 100 miles.

The closing banquet was all that remained on the schedule. The evening was an enjoyable conclusion to a week packed with memories that I will forever remember.

I'm going back home prouder than ever to be a part of the best profession in the world. I can't wait for my next GCSAA Conference and Show!

## FOR SALE

1. (2) TORO 3000 Greensmowers excellent condition, 11 bladed reels, winter maintenance completed, 1,722 \$1,840 Hours ..... **\$6,000 each**
2. Roseman 7 Gang Rough Mower 4 bladed reels overhauled & sharpened ..... **\$1,500**
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4. Terra Aerifier Model 320 ..... **\$1,500**
5. Spray Unit 1983 Cushman 3 wheel 18 Hp 1985 Bean 100 gallon Sprayer with 15' boom ..... **\$1,500**
6. Cushman 3 wheel 18 Hp short box ..... **\$800**
7. Cushman 3 wheel 12 Hp short box ..... **\$600**
8. Foley Reel Guide Model 388 ..... **\$500**
9. Foley Bedknife Grinder Model 384 ..... **\$500**
10. Cushman Tow Behind Spiker ..... **\$100**
11. Dedoes Drum Aerifier Cushman Mount ..... **\$100**
12. Jay Dee Line Painter Model 3300 ..... **\$100**

*All of the equipment is in good working condition.*

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