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BEING A "PEOPLE PERSON"

By Pat Norton

A "people person": a guy who really enjoys being around people, dealing with them, and providing services to them. A guy who can deal with club politics, who can deal with the whims of the "powers that be" while never getting annoyed or upset at stupid decisions. A guy who loves dealing with the golfers, or the members...schmooze 'em a bit...always knowing just what to say...and always feeling comfortable around people.

That's what I'd like to be, I used to tell myself. I can do this "club manager's routine". Organize a few golf specials, staff the clubhouse, open the doors, let the golfers beat the door down, and DEPOSIT, DEPOSIT, and keep on DEPOSITING all of those green fees.

What a crock!! Unfortunately, it's just a bit more complicated than that. A most important asset in public golf is to be established — an established course in good condition, an established management, and an established base of loyal golfers. The road to establishment in public golf isn't always so easy...tough to establish yourself when you're 30 - 45 minutes away from all of the golfers.

And every golf course needs a truly good "people person". This person acts as host, organizes and promotes the golf program, and manages the clubhouse. That person must be someone with the above mentioned "people" qualities and someone with a professional background in golf.

I found out during 1994 that I was not that type of person. I am not an office person. Like everybody else reading this, I am an outdoors person. I hate being inside doing office work (except on cold, windy days). I am a superintendent of a golf course, and I love it. It's an unusual occupation, and an honorable one.

The golf course down here at Nettle Creek was really hurting when I got involved in April 1994. It was new, raw, and extremely unfinished. The previous owners put this course together through performing miracles and then simply ran out of money. It is a commonly heard story. The new owners buy it at a great price and sort of put it all together and make it into a successful public golf operation.

What John Tobie and I jumped into here last year was kind of a tough situation. No pre-season shop time... not a semblance of a well-trained crew...and a golf course needing so much attention that it was difficult to focus everybody's attention on the real priorities.

We had to organize a golf program from the ground up, also. There were green fees established and that's about it —no golf policies, no membership program, and because of it all, no certainty that we'd be able to attract golfers!! I'd never done any of that before in my career, but it's no problem, so why worry?

Now add into this boiling cauldron four new golf course

owners, all successful local businessman, all wanting to be very involved, and all with their respective ideas and opinions. I had been dealing with one owner representative/green committee chairman, which is far superior to having everybody so involved.

So what developed was four owners always being at the course, kibitzing JUST A LITTLE BIT, a general manager (myself) not really suited for inside management, a young and headstrong superintendent getting caught in the middle, and by late season the realization that changes were inevitable.

For my part, I was at serious fault for not dealing successfully with these people. That's because I'm not truly a great "people person". I am very poor at doing what people ask of me, especially if I consider it to be wrong, stupid or of a low priority. A good "people person" deals with the request and gets it done regardless of its perceived merit. There are politics in any line of work, I guess...

Some of us in this business, myself included, would probably fail in our duties if placed at a high-end private club or resort course...I probably could not handle the people as well as others do. But, I am learning as I



age...heck, I ought to be an expert at dealing with new and different course situations. Maybe my mother was right ... I always was a slow learner!!!

What has transpired here since last season is very encouraging. Our management team has been bolstered by the addition of John Keegan as PGA pro and general manager. John is a true "people person" — he's been the golf professional at the local private club and is the ideal person to fit that role at our course.

I am now assigned to golf course operations and improvements exclusively. Oh, darn! And really, that's what I love and where I belong. I love being out on the course, thinking of course improvements, tasks to finish, problems to solve, and priorities to establish. If you all are like me, then most of your best thinking really does occur when outside, unencumbered by the confines of office walls.

Our mission for the golf course is constantly being updated and redefined. We spent a lot of time and effort in the off season on planning, budgeting and forecasting of our golf future. In the past few weeks, though, there have been some really serious discussion on the merit of accelerating the rate of course improvements.

Original planning called for cartpaths to be established with gravel in the next two years and the beginning of asphalt in 1997. Now we are planning on doing all of the cartpath work this year. That is really good thinking for

this course situation — you are dead on a super-sized public course such as ours without good asphalt paths.

The same acceleration may take place with our drainage, our bunkers, our tree planting/landscaping and the establishment of our regrassing/wildflower/pheasant habit/native grasses program — stuff that all superintendents just love to have happening on their courses!!

So, do I mind giving up my duties as club manager? Yes, a little bit. Overly zealous owners dictating course policy got a bit much last year, but time has healed that wound for me. Overall, I don't mind these organizational changes at all. There came a critical point for me when I totally realized that golf course management was "my cup of tea", not inside club management.

I do not mind giving up the bartending, the total week-end time commitment, or closing up at 10 p.m. I do not miss any of it at all.

What we "non-people" types thrive on is taking a lousy golf property and converting it from a sad to a grand condition. We all love that...seeing the constant improvement ...touring "our" courses...surveying our kingdoms, so to speak.

And we superintendent types generally are "people people". We would just rather be dealing with people out on the course instead of on a daily basis in the clubhouse.

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Setting a Tone for the Next Generation of Professionals

By Dr. Frank S. Rossi

My early years on the golf course were filled with curiosity about the land. Growing up in the metropolitan New York area I found the golf course to be a place to wonder about plants and animals. Eventually at age 15, I recognized the golfer and green committee as part of the ecosystem. It was then I remember viewing the superintendent from a different perspective. My curiosity about turf began to grow as I noticed the less-than-professional tone that the superintendent set with the staff.

I recall sifting around the shop for turf magazines and sometimes pulling a few out of the trash (of course there was an assortment of alternative literature around the shop as well). My curiosity always led me to the *Green Section Record*; *Weeds, Trees and Turf* (now called *Landscape Management*), and the GCSAA's *Golf Course Management*. I remember thinking that these magazines depicted superintendents in a way that seemed more respectable than what I had known.

After high school, I was off to junior college at SUNY Cobleskill and met Bob Emmons and I knew what I wanted to do. Bob, a former superintendent turned educator, became my first mentor that lit the fire inside me. My first formal step into the profession was signing up for the turf class and joining the GCSAA. When my membership card arrived, it was a big deal. I hadn't had any other type of card other than my license and now I felt like I belonged to something bigger than me (it wasn't long after that the credit card companies got to me).

The next summer, on the same golf course I started my career from, I began to question the way things were done and was promptly terminated. I had reached a turning point in my career. The fire wasn't out; rather, it was smoldering. I wondered why there was such a gap between the way in which I read about the professional superintendent and what I knew first hand. The gap would close the following season.

My next stop was at a course with golf course managers who liked talking turf; my fire was re-ignited. The superintendent and assistant set a professional tone and the staff responded in kind. For example, the assistant graphed the daily temperature and disease problems on a wall chart and I remember keeping a look out for observations to add. I had my curiosity peaked and I had respect for the professionals I worked for.

I experienced some harsh reality as an assistant superintendent. I came out of college as most young people do, filled with ideas and ready to put some of my knowledge to work. I think about how different my career might have been if my enthusiasm was embraced and directed instead of squashed. I became frustrated and disillusioned with the profession. I decided I really loved the work, but wanted to contribute to the profession at a different level.

Off to grad school I went and ran head on into John Jagschitz (Jaggie), a weed scientist who embraced my interest and let me learn from him. I maintained my golf course hours (up and in at 5am) and Jaggie and I spent many an early morning at the turf research farm talking turf and statistics. Among Jaggie, Dr. Skogley and Dr. Jackson, the tone of excellence in the turfgrass information area was set and I felt a part of it.

The remainder of my formal education and early academic career brought me in contact with professionals who taught me the value of leading by example. Joe Neal, my Ph.D. advisor, taught me about critical thinking; Joanne G, an extension associate at Cornell, taught me about educational programming. At Michigan State, I was surrounded by talent in many different forms; the flamboyant and free thinking plant pathologist, the keen intellectual physiologist, the wise and thoughtful soils extension leader and the sharp educational promoter. Each set a tone in their area that demanded quality and respect. I am a better professional and

person for those years. Who set a tone for you?

In my years as an extension guy and now having the opportunity to serve on national committees I am regularly impressed by the professionals I meet. They come in many different forms. Not everyone has to serve at the national level; rather, it is more that you do something to contribute to the profession. If that is inspiring a person with some interest, then direct them towards some formal education. It might be working with the local boy scout troop building bird houses, or writing an article for the church newsletter on something that interests you. Set a tone in your community and with your staff. As I always say, being a professional is more than wearing a tie.

I left out an important aspect of my experience. Along the way I learned an important personal lesson; all work and no family makes Frank no fun to be around. I lost sight of the important balance between a career and family. I still notice today, how the instant gratification of the financial and professional rewards distract me from my long term commitment and the long lasting value of setting a loving tone with my family. Sometimes I can get so distracted I forget how much I miss each day I'm not engaged in family stuff. I'm not just talking about showing up for dance recitals or soccer games. I'm talking about reading to my daughter at night, planning a garden with my wife, playing crazy eights, etc.. It's not just physically being there; it's being engaged and demonstrating your commitment (not just saying it, but doing it). I realize this more these days as Barbara, Danielle and I expect the arrival of our second child this summer.

Think about the tone you set with your life. Do people you work and live with feel like they're a part of what goes on? Or is everyone just delegated a task leaving the communication to be in one direction? I know I would not be where I am today without being involved with people who openly shared information and who genuinely cared for my input. It might be more difficult than one-way communication but we run the risk of leaving a legacy of professionals and people who won't survive the changes ahead. Set the tone now. 🌱



Reducing the Risk of Fungicide Resistance

By Dr. Julie Meyer
Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fungicide resistance occurs when a fungus changes genetically and is no longer sensitive to the toxic effects of a fungicide. Resistance can build up to some fungicides used commonly in turf. The main concern with resistance is that the fungicide, and all those with a similar active ingredient, will then no longer be available as a tool for disease management.

What actually happens when a fungicide is no longer effective is that a new population of the pathogen has built up on the site of repeated fungicide application. Before a fungicide program is implemented, nearly all members of the target pathogen population are sensitive to the toxic effects of the fungicide. As time goes on, however, the sensitive members of the population die out and the (once very small) population that is resistant, either from genetic mutations or from natural resistance, starts to build up. Soon the population is predominately the resistant type and at this point the fungicide no longer works.

Sometimes these resistant strains die out again because they are weaker organisms in general. If this is the case, then the fungicide may work again in a year or two. This has been known to occur on occasion with fungi that became resistant to sterol-inhibiting fungicides. However, resistance to other fungicide groups, such as the benimidazole fungicides, can be more or less permanent because the resistant types are strong and stable.

Development of fungicide resistance occurs most quickly in those fungicides that act on a fungus in a very specific way. Most of the systemic fungicides that were introduced in the 1960's and early 1970's have very specific modes of action. For example, fungicides containing benzimidazole (benomyl) as

an active ingredient are toxic to fungi because they disrupt a very specific event during cell division (growth of the fungus). Sterol-inhibiting fungicides interfere with a very specific step in a biochemical pathway as the fungus is forming basic compounds it needs to grow. Although fungicides with specific modes of action are excellent fungicidal compounds in many ways, the development of resistance continues to be a concern.

Also, certain fungi are more likely to become resistant to fungicides than others. Fungi that are heavily dependent on the pathogenic way of life are more likely to change genetically in order to continue to be able to infect the plant. In turf these include fungi that cause rust, powdery mildew, downy mildew, dollar spot and *Fusarium* patch (pink snow mold). Dollar spot is probably of greatest concern to golf course superintendents. Other fungi are perfectly well adapted to living most of their life as saprophytes on decaying organic matter and are under less "pressure" to change genetically if fungicides prevent pathogenic activity. *Rhizoctonia* (brown patch) and *Colletotrichum* (anthracnose) are examples of this type of fungus, which are not likely to develop fungicide-resistant populations very easily.

What can be done to manage resistance? There are several strategies that a turf manager should adopt to prevent resistance to some of the more vulnerable pathogens, especially dollar spot. One approach that many already use is to rotate fungicides with different chemical modes of action. For example, not using the same fungicide more than 3 successive applications before switching to one with a different mode of action. This requires information on the biochemistry of the

fungicide, since many fungicides share the same basic active ingredient. Some of the more common turf fungicides are grouped by their biochemical activity in Table 1.

Rotating fungicides on a yearly basis is another option. Dr. Joe Vargas has worked out an example of this approach in a resistance management program for dollar spot. In this program, fungicides with different modes of action are rotated over a 3-year cycle (Table 2). Since the most danger of fungicide resistance is with the sterol-inhibiting (DMI) fungicides, the use of this group of fungicides is restricted during the time when the population of dollar spot fungi is at its peak (usually late summer). This way, DMI fungicides can still be used, but much of the population will not be exposed.

Another approach to managing fungicide resistance is to use combinations of systemic fungicides with different modes of action at reduced rates. Work at Penn State University has showed successful prevention of resistance in Pythium blight to metalaxyl fungicides (Subdue) by combining Subdue at half-rate with half rates of Banol or Aliette or one-third rates of Subdue-Banol-Aliette.

Managing fungicide resistance will always be a part of using fungicides. Fungicides that act in a very specific way will continue to be developed and used for several reasons. One is because they are excellent fungicides. A second reason is that their very specificity also makes them less likely to harm beneficial microorganisms in the turf and soil. As long as we remain aware of the potential for resistance, and plan long-term fungicide programs accordingly, these excellent compounds are likely to remain effective tools for a long time.

Table 1. Biochemical groups of common turf fungicides and potential for development of resistance.

Biochemical Group	Resistance potential	Example Trade Names
<i>Systemic fungicides</i>		
Benzimidazoles: benomyl, thiophanate methyl	high	Cleary's 3336, Tersan 1991, ProTurf Systemic Fungicide, Fungo 85
Dicarboximides: iprodione, vinclozin	moderate	Chipco 26019, Vorlan, ProTurf Fungicide X, Rovral
Phenylamides: metalaxyl	high	Subdue, ProTurf Pythium Control
Sterol inhibitors (demethylation inhibitors or DMI): fenarimol, triademifon, propiconazole	high	Rubigan, Bayleton, ProTurf Fungicide VII, Banner, Sentinel
<i>Contact fungicides</i>		
Dithiocarbamates: maneb, mancozeb	low	Manzate 200, Fore
Ethazoles	low	Koban, Terrazole
Phosphonates: fosetyl Al	low	Aliette
Substituted aromatic compounds: PCNB, chlorothalonil, chloroneb	low	Daconil 2787, Proturf Fungicide and Fertilizer II, Pennstar, Terraclor 75
Thiram	low	Spotrete, Tersan 75

Table 2. Fungicide program to delay development of DMI-resistance in dollar spot fungi.

Spring-Early Summer	Mid-summer	Late summer-Fall
DMI fungicides	Year 1: Contacts Year 2: Contacts and Benzimidazoles Year 3: Benzimidazoles and Dicarboximides	Year 1: DMI's Year 2: Dicarboximides Year 3: Contacts

From: J.M. Vargas Jr. Management of Turfgrass Diseases. Second Edition. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. 1994.

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1 Vicon fertilizer spreader/topdresser with Cushman attachment
1 Cab for Cushman - two years old
1 Toro/Olathe core pulverizer - used twice
3 1970s vintage Cushmans. Parts. Tow still run
1 1980 Toro 7-blade Turf Pro 84

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Conference Comments and Questions

By Monroe S. Miller

Joe Baidy Did A Good Job!

It has been interesting watching Joe Baidy grow into the job of GCSAA president. Now that his term is over, I can say I think he did a good job on our behalf.

Joe has been sort of a blue collar president and director. He isn't the smoothest guy to ever hold the job; he isn't the most articulate president we've had and he isn't really an accomplished speaker, either. And he doesn't dress like he just walked out of the pro shop. "Cool" isn't an adjective I would use to describe him.

Rather, he's a practical, good-natured, down-to-earth man who has been truly and sincerely committed to his responsibilities. He laughs easily and works hard and has a load of common sense. At a time when we have a White House resident known as "Slick", surely that isn't what GCSAA needed at the same time.

In his time, Joe Baidy was in the right place for us. He seems to have been the right person exactly when we needed him.

I served on a Baidy committee his first year on the board of directors, and I served on a committee during his presidency. The personal growth of the guy impressed me. I saw, after seven years, a man who had obviously worked on things he knew needed improvement — pronunciation, for example. He was, during his presidency, pretty savvy when compared to his rookie year.

The man is likeable, proud and pragmatic. I especially like his feeling for our history, as shown by the new historic preservation committee he initiated. He might, if the truth be known, be closer to the typical golf course superintendent than anyone we have had in a while.

He believes in education — he has a four-year degree in turfgrass management from Penn State. He is outgoing,

unassuming and I'll bet his golf course is in top notch condition. So, my hat is off to you, Joe. Stick with us; you still have a lot to give. Thanks.


Is GCSAA Conference "FOR SALE"?

The GCSAA conference and show this year reminded me a little bit of the Olympics. *Shotz Beer*, official sponsor of the *US Olympic team* and *Happy Holstein Golf Course Compost*, official sponsor of the official GCSAA Show Floor Rest Rooms sound too much alike for me.

The decision to put the touch on manufacturers to buy food, booze and rain gear for certain GCSAA members is a bummer, downer, outer and loser. I hope the first year of the practice is the last.

Although it wasn't obnoxious commercialism, it did border on being crass. I am a little surprised the manufacturers went along. But let's fact it — whatever money was spent by sponsors of various conference events will ultimately be paid for by the customers. And it seems to me a little rude to expect a member from a smaller facility who may not be able to attend the national meeting to have to contribute to the purchase of an expensive duffel bag for a tournament player at one of the jazzy Monterey area golf courses. Anyone who can afford to play in the tournament can afford to buy his own duffel bag (or whatever the freebies actually were).

Similarly, why should those of us who choose to pass on the CGCS deal have to buy lunch for those who want to participate? I thought it was hilarious that the CGCS luncheon was packed this year compared to any previous year; it only proves that CGCS members love a freebie meal! If the luncheon was important to that crowd, it seems they could afford to buy their own food.



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