

BOARD SILLY

by Fred Taylor, Asst Superintendent
Mankato Golf Club

One of the unwritten duties of an assistant superintendent is to change a few things in and around the maintenance building while the superintendent is on vacation. These changes may be subtle, like rearranging the office furniture; or more dramatic, like ordering all new office furniture. The assistant's sense of discretion as well as the superintendent's propensity to be humored dictate the level of change that can be safely considered.

One of the changes that we at the Mankato Golf Club made while superintendent "Boots" Fuller was away, was the installation of a 4' by 8' white marking board, or "white board", to help with communication and task assignments. For those unfamiliar with the white board, it is similar to a blackboard in function, but doesn't propagate dust from the chalk. The water-based markers for the whiteboard come in an array of colors and erase easily. Best of all, it is virtually impossible for a spunky staff member to make that bone-chilling shriek while scratching their fingernails down the board.

I was first introduced to the features of the whiteboard by a silver tongued, smooth operating insurance salesman named Gary. Gary was intimate with his board. Together they made lists, drew charts, changed colors, and circled unbelievably large dollar figures. I didn't buy any insurance from Gary, but if he would have parted with it, I'd have bought the board right then and there. I mean if a guy can sell insurance with this thing, just think what it will do for us trying to explain to a new staff member the fastest way to the local donut shop!

We had used a blackboard in our operation before, but it was far from being adequate. It was small (about 20" by 24") and difficult to write on because the black, painted-on finish had worn down to the underlying tin from use. In a previous life, you see, it displayed soda and hot dog prices in a traveling concession stand. The "Pepsi" logo was still prominently displayed above the black portion to remind us of it's humble beginnings. Adequate or not, it was free; and, let's face it, free stuff is just darned hard to criticize, or worse, throw out.

After much discussion with our mechanic, Dave Sime, it was decided to obtain prices on a new whiteboard. Catalogue prices ranged from \$50.00 for a small melamine board to over \$350.00 for a 4' by 8' ceramic board that weighed nearly 200 pounds. A few calls to area office supply stores confirmed these prices. The

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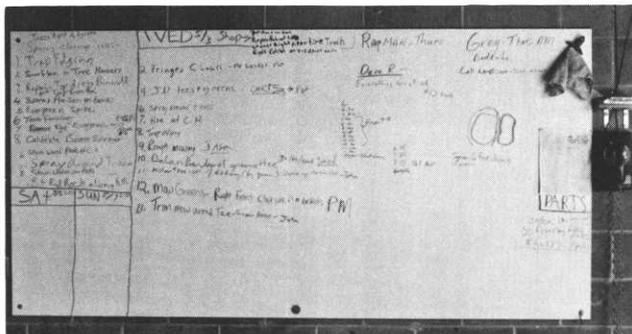
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ceramic boards, we were told, would last nearly forever. The melamine, on the other hand, could wear out over time and may stain if words or symbols from the markers were left on the board for an extended period of time. I felt that a 4' by 8' ceramic would be the best way to go, but at \$350.00 there was no way I could look Boots in the eye when he returned from his vacation and say, "Guess what we chopped from the budget to afford this little beauty?" A prudent assistant, after all, does have limits.



Dave and I were about ready to give up on the idea because of the cost until I wandered through the local lumber yard one day. There, among the various sheets of paneling and wallboard, was a white 4' by 8' sheet labeled "melamine". The price? \$6.99. Now there was a price we could live with.

The next day, I told Dave of my discovery. He immediately went down to the nearest office supply store and purchased a four color pack of the erasable marking pens. He then proceeded to the lumber yard to do a little test marking on the melamine board that I had seen. Once satisfied that the markers would show up well and erase easily, Dave bought the melamine sheet along with a 4' by 8' sheet of 1/2" plywood and a can of panel adhesive. He then glued the plywood to the back of the melamine sheet for strength and rigidity. After that, he drilled eight holes along the perimeter of the board and bolted the entire unit to the interior wall of our shop. For about \$35.00 and a couple of hours of labor, we made one of the best improvements to our maintenance program since we offered our stimpmeter in a sacrificial meltdown.

Once installed, there are a number of uses for the whiteboard. Illustrations of all sorts can be made to help give directions or instructions to staff members. Daily task assignments can be written in numerical order of priority and then erased upon completion. John Harris (another proponent of whiteboards) suggests listing upcoming and ongoing projects in one special area. Because of the large size of our board, we can list phone messages, equipment problems, parts lists, special events, rainfall amounts, and still have room for the occasional graffiti. Imagination is the only limit to the successful use of the whiteboard.

MGCSA BOARD OF DIRECTOR PROFILE GREG HUBBARD



SPOUSE - Bonnie.

CHILDREN - Elizabeth, age 7; and David, age 5.

CLUB AFFILIATION - Manitou Ridge Golf Club.

PAST EMPLOYMENT HISTORY - Leased Golf Course since 1971.

EDUCATION - B.A. in Economics, University of Minnesota.

INTERESTS - Golf, Camping, Canoeing.

HONORS - Achieved certification status (CGCS) in 1988.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS - Editorial Committee, 1989 and Research Committee, 1988-1989.

COMMITTEE GOALS - Our Editorial goal is to improve quality and stability of the Hole Notes. The Research goal is to examine solution to Minnesota based turf problems.

MGCSA GOALS - To lend my experience and talents to the future of Minnesota Golf and improve the status of the Golf Course Superintendent.

PAST MGCSA POSITIONS - Research Committee, 1988.

OTHER MEMBERSHIPS - Secretary/Treasurer of the Minnesota Golf Course Association, 1987-1989.

CAREER GOALS - To provide a quality golf course for myself and my members - eventual ownership of a golf facility.

CLOSING COMMENT - An investment in golf now, will pay dividends in the future.