

HOLE NOTES

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Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association

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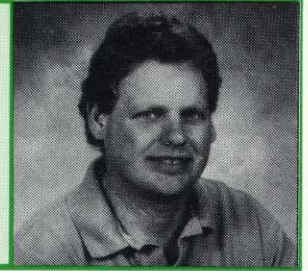
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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S DESK

Imaging



The image of the golf course superintendent has been the focus of scores of speeches, articles and presentations in the last twenty years that I can attest to, and probably much further back in time than that. Recently, in the May issue of *Golf Course Management*, GCSAA President Paul McGinnis, CGCS, points out the importance of building and maintaining a solid and respectable image. The question of how our image fits into the complexities of what we superintendents do however, remains a mystery. Or, as my friend Greg Hubbard CGCS, would say, "The concept is somewhat nebulous."

I first pondered the issue many years ago when a leggy woman named Bobbie Gee spoke at our state conference. Bobbie made a living telling people how important image is, and then how to improve that image. Interestingly, Bobbie's husband was a golf course superintendent. Hence, she was in tune to the problems we as a profession had (have) with our image. As a then young and impressionable cub, I enthusiastically bought the four cassette learning package which she provided for about 35 bucks, as I recall.

To Bobbie, image is king. It's the color of your suit, the firmness of your handshake, direct eye contact, spit-shined penny loafers and the current issue of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* that graciously adorns the front seat of your Beemer, or whatever vehicle the "Empowered Generation" is driving these days. The theme here is that image is more important than substance. Gak! Could this be true?

Some years later a fellow named Jack Kane spoke at our state conference. I don't remember a whole lot from his talk, but one thing he stated, and I did write it down, is this: "Perception supercedes reality." Perception supercedes reality? Where? Reality is reality, right? Maybe not.

Let me give you an example of perception outweighing reality. My folks were in the restaurant and supper club business for many years. They knew that in order to be successful you had to do two things: 1) Keep the patrons happy by serving good food, and 2) keep food costs low. One trick that melded these two seemingly conflicting objectives was used by my father. Every Saturday, in anticipation of the Saturday night steak fry, old Dad would proceed to sharpen and hone his knives until they were razor sharp. The perception? Customers would rave about the tender steaks that "cut like butter." The reality? Those were average cuts of meat at best, but a sharp knife made them seem like something Ruth's Chris would be proud to serve.

Belaboring the point further, think of the bank executive who has been spending late night after late night at the office working on a big bank deal with his lusciously attractive assistant. The facts are, and the reality is, that the two of them are really just working. But what if the banker's wife is just a tad on the jealous and suspicious side? If her perception is that of hanky panky in the board room, I'll lay you six to one that no matter what the facts are, banker boy is going to find his belongings in the street, and he didn't bother looking for the Corvette keys in the bottom of the bag, either. Perception does supercede reality.

We've established that image and perception are important, but in the overall

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EDITOR'S CORNER

By Rob Panuska
Waseca Lakeside Club



Are we having fun yet??? With summer in high gear the demands of our positions as superintendents, assistants and grounds workers increase almost overnight. The challenges we face each day can overwhelm us if we don't take time to regenerate and get a fresh perspective. On Monday, June 16 many of us did just that at Cannon Golf Club in Cannon Falls. Host superintendent Jeff Backstrom and his crew had the course in outstanding condition. GREAT JOB, JEFF!!! Marty Terveer from Hidden Creek, Rick Lucken from Benson and I had the dubious honor of golfing with Steve (I can make this putt) Garske from Par Aide. Be sure to look for more from our first golf outing of the year throughout this issue. See you in Owatonna for the scholarship scramble on July 14.

* * * *

Congratulations to Butch and Beth Greeninger on the birth of their daughter Kelly on June 13. Also congrats to our president Fred and first lady Amy; they are expecting their first in November. And as long as we're at it, congratulations to Par Aide's Jeff Langevin and his wife Laura on their nine pound baby boy born on June 8.

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Even though the news media has put the '97 floods on the back shelf, we all need to realize that the rebuilding process will take time. Help is still needed by businesses and individuals in the flood regions. If you or your course can offer any kind of assistance, please call our association office.

* * * *

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the MTGF Expo on August 6 & 7. I have attended the last several years and enjoyed the event. It is held at Resurrection Cemetery in Mendota Heights and runs from 9:00 a.m. — 2:30 p.m..

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Please send me your thoughts about a topic or project at your course. Some ideas might include tournament preparations, landscaping difficult areas, maintenance shop layouts and ideas, computerizing your records. The list of topics could go on and on. If you see an interesting article that you think our members would enjoy, get me a copy and the source for permission to reprint. We are always in need of material; your help would be greatly appreciated, thanks!!

— Rob Panuska
Editor

President's Column—

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framework of our positions, how do they rank against other areas of knowledge and skill that we might possess? In other words, is knowing what color tie to wear at the club's spring social more important than knowing which nitrogen source responds best on your fairways? OF COURSE NOT! I like to think of our jobs as a refined racing engine, and image as the oil that keeps our engine lubricated. With the right amount of good oil, our engine is strong and powerful. But take away our good image (oil), and friction creates heat that eventually destroys the engine. All that is left is a pile of melted pistons in the middle of the race track.

Image, you see, is not substantive, but a thin coating that surrounds things of substance. By itself, image is only so much candy coating on an M & M; only so much snot on a doorknob. It's a thin coat of polish on an old pair of shoes. It seems to me that developing a good image, then, is secondary to knowing what we're doing on the golf course. After all, there is no sense in putting a fresh coat of paint on a broken down fence. Our challenge is to first know that fundamentals of turf and golf course management, then to use them wisely, and finally to polish and refine ourselves in order to gain the respect that we so desire and deserve.

— Fred Taylor
MGCSA President



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