

EDITOR'S CORNER

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Summertime Stress!

It is your turf, your members or is it you? Or maybe a little of each? This time of year is hard on everything, you and your courses. The heat stress is difficult on turf and maybe even gets to our tempers a little, too. Sometimes our expectations are set a little higher than they should be. But hey, we all want perfection! As professionals, we know how we want our courses to look but sometimes trying to get our staff to envision just exactly what we want to see is a hard task. Most of them don't live their jobs the same way we do. But through good communication they can carry out and see what we want, that is if we let them be a big part of what we do. Because without them, we're all alone! Being a team is what it's all about. Being able to relate to the summer kids. Remembering what it was like when we were in their shoes. Sure we're managers, but we still have fun doing what we do, don't we? Or why else would we be here but to teach our staff ethics and values they may use throughout their lives. For most of us, some of our summer staff is experiencing the first job they've ever had. It is up to us to make, however we can, the jobs we give them fun. Work doesn't have to be work. It is only work if you make it that way. If you make it "work" all the time, it makes for a long day! Who knows, we might be the ones they base their work ethic on for the future so we want to do our best and make sure they look at all the details.

Dealing With Stress

This is going to sound funny but last month I wrote about green speed and height of rough. Frankly, I forgot about what I had written until I had a greens committee meeting, and BOOM!!! I hit it on the head. I (for lack of a better phrase) got my butt chewed about the speed of the greens! Hmmmm, who's heard that before? Anyway, I got home that afternoon and received my *Hole Notes* in the mail that day. I read what I had written a month before and laughed. I only wish I had it a day earlier then and I could have thrown it down on the table at the meeting and walked out of the room and saved myself some aggravation. The funny thing is...I expected it! It was just that time of year. I didn't think it was funny at the time but I do now. One of the things that got me through my little dilemma was calling some of my fellow superintendents. They've been hearing the same things I have. (Imagine that.) It's these types of situations that make me glad to be a member of such a strong association that we have with the MGCSA. I'm serious...who better to tell your problems to than another person that does the same thing you do? Who else can relate in such a way that has dealt with or is dealing with the same situations. That's what this association is all about. Sure we want to be educated in the latest technologies, and we are, but we need to educate each other, talk to each other, be there for each other. To me that is a big thing about our association. Communication, yep, there's that "C" word again!

We can't go it alone! If you think you can do it alone . . . then you are mistaken! If we all work together, it makes our jobs that much easier.

For instance, this past weekend I had a wedding in Duluth. I called Dave Kohlbray at Northland Country Club and told him I'd be in his neighborhood. I stopped at his house and visited for a while. We talked about the business and life in general. One of the things Dave said to me was something I never thought about. We, as superintendents, can rely on other superintendents for just about anything. Let's just say you and your family are traveling and your car breaks down. Who better a person to call than the local golf course superintendent? Do you think the superintendent is not going to help you? NOT GONNA HAPPEN!!! Who else, in the town your car broke down in, could help you better? Who usually has connections . . . it ain't what you know . . . it's who you know!

On a positive note, who can tell you where the best eating places might be or what lakes fish might be biting in. With that note, Dave, I can't thank you enough. It's always a pleasure (especially this time of year) to kick back and shoot the breeze with someone that can truly relate! Not that our spouses can't relate, but it's just different talking to another superintendent.

Straw Bales in Ponds?

Do they really work? What am I talking about? Some say that putting straw bales in your ponds helps control algae. I'm not an expert on this but I'll tell you what I know. One of my members told me about this and I researched the topic on GCSAA's "Turf Talk" through the internet. I came across many positive responses. Not to shoot from the hip or anything like that. But here it goes. Barley straw works best. As far as how this works exactly, I'm not sure. But I'm trying it none-the-less. If there is a natural way to control algae, I'm for it. I do know one thing about this. It will not help with underwater weeds (seaweed). What you do is simple. Find a square bale, wrap it in steel twine so it stays together and throw it in your pond. How simple is that? If you can't find square bales, use round ones and break them down and wrap the straw in chicken wire so it won't float around. I've heard bales don't sink so you might want to put them somewhere out of plain sight. After a while whatever seeds are in the bales start to grow, too. In the short time the bales have been in my ponds I've noticed the turtles like them to sun themselves — so I got that going for me! If anything, it might be a positive conversation piece at your course. If anyone knows more about this subject, please let me know! I for one would like to know how this works.

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Congratulations to Mike Nelson on the birth of his son, Blake Michael Nelson, born on April 18th. I hope all is well for you and the rest of your family. It's always nice to print such an event as a birth. A new life brought into this world is a special thing and should be shared by all.

With that I say to all of you, I hope your summer is going well. If there's something you might have a question on, call your neighbor. They'll more than likely be happy to help. My sympathy goes out to all who have been stricken with bad weather this season. I hope the clean-up goes well for all of you and the scars heal quickly!

See ya next month.

— Steve Shumansky
Editor