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HOLE NOTES

Official Publication
of the
Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association

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From Your President's Desk

Fall is in the Air



As I sit down to write another note for this issue of *Hole Notes*, I am overwhelmed with a sense of urgency. The temperature today will be a high of 70 degrees with a stiff breeze. It feels like fall, thus my sense of urgency. It occurs to me that it is once again time to line up the compressor for the blow out, plan for the staff departure to school and get to work on the projects we have yet to complete. In other words it is time to recommit ourselves to the tasks at hand.

The Board has also recommitted itself to the tasks at hand. The annual meeting is just around the corner and final preparations are underway. This year's meeting should prove quite interesting. Along with the normal voting for candidates we will also be holding a special vote to determine the associations support of the PDI. We will use this vote to determine how our representatives will vote for the proposal. The percentage of yes and no votes cast at the MGCSA annual meeting will affect the percentage of yes and no votes cast at the GCSAA annual meeting. So plan on attending to let us know how you feel. In the next few weeks you should all be receiving the final form of the PDI for your review. There have been some significant changes so be sure to take a close look to see how this program from GCSAA will affect you.

We have also recommitted our support of the turf programs at the University of Minnesota. We have started to rebuild our relationships at the University to help foster a stronger support of our industry. From the University end there is a substantial amount of research being done by a number of individuals in the turf-grass fields. From our end we have redirected our research money back to the state and regional areas and away from the national programs. We are still supporting national programs, but we will be looking for some support back from them.

Along with our financial support we have offered other support to help with the programs throughout the state. Our vendor members have donated equipment or supplies to the turf programs and for that we, as an association, are very proud. The individuals on the research committee and others have donated their time to assist in the cover study done at Rolling Green, as well as donation of space by Rolling Green for the study to be conducted. If any individuals or clubs have anything they may be able to donate or lend, please contact a board member and we will point you in the right direction.

The stronger our turf program at the University becomes, the stronger we as an association become when the inevitable discussions start taking place at the legislature about limiting the tools we use to maintain our turfgrass.

* * * *

Congratulations to Fred Taylor, CGCS, Mankato Golf Club, for completing the requirements needed to become a Certified Golf Course Superintendent.

-- Respectfully,
Paul Eckholm, CGCS

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This is a revision of a previous advertisement. The City of St. Paul Como Golf Course has (2) Foley Accu-spin II Reel Spin Grinders, model # 3096. One 1990 and one 1992 in very good condition. The City had these out for bid with a minimum of \$1,500 each. The City has now dropped their minimum bid and will be accepting bids for these grinders until Friday, September 1, 2000. If you would like a bid form mailed, please contact the Office of Contract and Analysis Services at (651) 266-8900 and ask for bid form #U21494-4 REBID

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Great Horned Owl Discovered at Minikahda

By JEFF JOHNSON
The Minikahda Club

Since 1996 The Minikahda Club has been a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. In that time, the club has played an active role in promoting and protecting its status in this special group of golf courses throughout the country. In order for certified courses to remain certified, they must continue to show environmentally sound practices in their maintenance programs on a yearly basis.

There are basically six categories that must be maintained. Those categories are Environmental Planning, Outreach and Education, Integrated Pest Management, Wildlife Habitat Management, Water Conservation and Water Quality Management. Once the certification process has taken place, maintaining these classifications is not as difficult as it may seem. Audubon International wants to make sure that each golf course is making a positive impact on the land.

Out of the six categories we do admit to having a tough time meeting the requirements of Outreach and Education. But, two ways that we have been able to meet these needs is through our annual birdwatch, which coincides with Audubon's U.S. Birdwatching Open in May, and our sponsoring of Creek Valley Elementary School in Edina for the Adopt-a-School Sanctuary Program.

Although we are meeting the requirements requested by Audubon International, we are always looking for ways to improve our program. In February of 1999 such an oppor-



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT JEFF JOHNSON, presenting the Great Horned Owl to Creek Valley Elementary students.

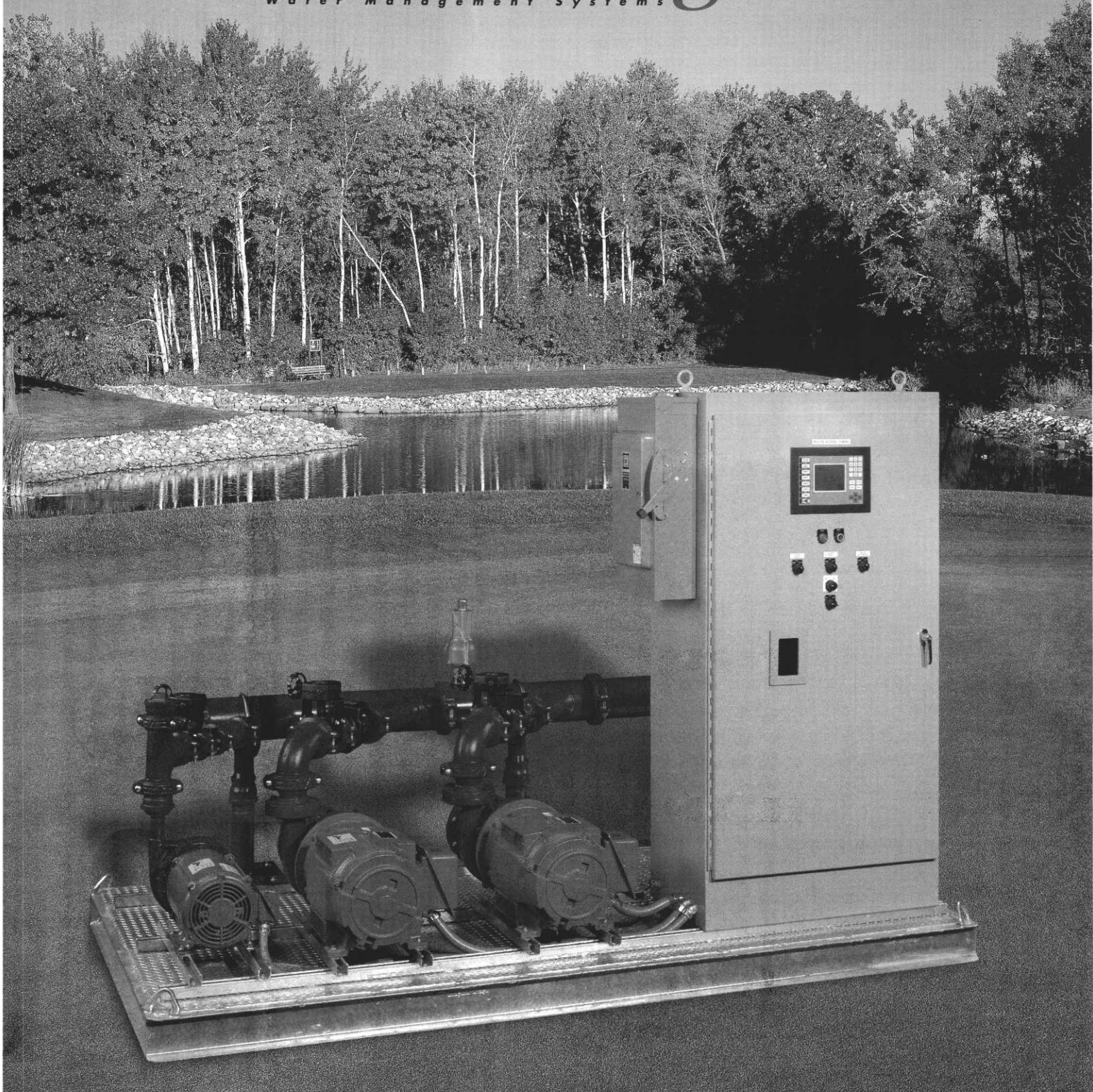
tunity basically dropped into our laps, or should we say dropped onto our golf course. I was walking my dog on the golf course when I noticed her tugging on something on the ground. Upon further inspection, it was a Great Horned Owl that was revealed. This bird had recently died and was in excellent condition. I picked it up and brought it to the maintenance building, placed it in plastic bag and put it in the freezer.

The next task was to decide what to do with this bird. Our first thought was to have the bird mounted and place it in our maintenance facility for our enjoyment. After call-

(Continued on Page 7)

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Great Horned Owl at Minikahda--

(Continued from Page 5)

ing a taxidermist, we were informed that this would not be possible, as it was a federally protected bird. First we needed a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and second, if we were granted a permit, the bird would need to be placed on public display.

After rethinking our somewhat selfish ways, we called our contact person at Creek Valley Elementary to see if they would be willing to display the bird.

They were delighted by the idea. Because the school was going to be displaying the bird, they needed to apply for the permit. Once the permit was in their hands, it was given to us so we could bring the owl to a taxidermist.

From that point it was in the taxidermist's hands. Due to a few problems at the taxidermists, he eventually had the finished product ready in May of this year. We contacted the school and arranged for a formal presentation. The week before the last day of the school season, Doug Mahl and I presented the Great Horned Owl to the school principal during the video-taped morning announcements. The students were in awe of the beauty and size of this magnificent bird. The Great Horned Owl is now being displayed in the school's media center, a location where students, teachers and parents can all enjoy the beauty of this bird.

In the beginning our Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses took time and a great deal of effort to establish. Even though this aspect of the maintenance program does take extra time, the rewards have outweighed any possible downfalls.

Before Minikahda began this sanctuary process, a Mallard duck was a rare sighting on the course. Since that time, a total of 96 different bird species have been identified. In 1997, *Links Magazine* awarded The Minikahda Club with a "Best of Golf" award for our commitment to environmental awareness and in 1998 we were awarded an Environmental Stewardship Merit Certificate from the Golf Course

Superintendents' Association of America.

If you are not currently a member of Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, now is the time to join. The benefits to the environment, the golf course and yourself will be well worth your time and effort.

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Giving and Receiving Criticism

Done properly, offering employees constructive criticism not only gets your point across, but helps establish a solid working relationship for the future.

By **JEFFREY P. DAVIDSON**
Author, Marketing and Business

Ruth Decker supervises a staff of eight in the county government's personnel office. Robert Hodges is the youngest and newest addition to Ruth's staff. One week, Ruth is scheduled to attend a management training program in the western part of the state and needs Robert to finish a report for the county manager by the time she returns at the end of the week. Over the telephone, Ruth carefully outlines for Robert what he needs to do and how he can reach her if he runs into problems.

Two days later, on Wednesday, Ruth has not received a call from Robert and assumes that he is encountering little difficulty in undertaking the assignment. By mid-afternoon Thursday, Ruth returns and is pleased to see Robert's typed, finished report on her desk ready for review and, hopefully, ready for submission on Friday. After only a few minutes Ruth realizes that Robert has missed the mark on some of the points made on the report, has completely left out one small section and has prepared a poor conclusion. Given that she must deliver the report the following day, Ruth is rather upset.

Her immediate reaction is to take the report over to Robert's office and, in strong language, ask why he hadn't sought help and why the report has various shortcomings. Report in hand, she marches in the direction of Robert's office and stops a few paces from the door. Robert is discussing a new task with another of Ruth's staff people. Ruth looks at her watch and notices it is about 3:30 p.m., so she heads back to her own office. Coolly and calmly thinking through the situation, she decides that the report is indeed salvageable and that, in about an hour, she can probably shore up its weak points, resubmit it to the production staff and still have it available Friday morning. An hour later, she is finished and the report is ready to be retyped. She makes an extra copy, which reflects the changes she added so that her subsequent discussion with Robert would involve mild criticism, mixed with supervisory assistance.

In this article we'll review both giving and receiving criticism and provide answers to the following:

- * What is the best time of the day and week to criticize employees?
- * When should you never criticize?
- * Where should the criticism be offered?
- * What are some effective ways to handle criticism levied at you?
- * How can you handle the chronic complainer?

Criticizing Without Crushing

Ruth meets with Robert on Friday morning to review his report, paragraph by paragraph. Ruth points out the strong points and the weak points and leaves Robert with a copy. She emphasizes that, although it was not desirable to issue the assignment by a long-distance telephone call and to follow up using the same, it's what the situation called for. She explains to Robert that calling for assistance while the report is in progress saves everyone time. Robert agrees that what she said makes sense and that he will follow her directions more closely in the future. By handling the situation in this manner, Ruth is able to provide constructive criticism to Robert that conveys her present concerns and offers assistance as well as establishes a solid working relationship for the future.

Let 'em Have It Early

Numerous management analysts agree that the best time to dispense employee criticism is early in the day and early in the week. This affords the opportunity to speak to the employee again some time during the day in a more casual, lighthearted way to assure the employee that everything is all right, that you criticized the performance or behavior but not the person, and that you have confidence in the employee's ability to continue to handle or assume responsibilities.

Criticizing late in the day poses several problems. First, you may end up sending an employee home who's worried or anxious about his or her job—unnecessarily so. Also, you and your staff are often tired at the end of the day, and any criticism or strongly worded message can be taken out of context or inflated because of the fatigue. The same holds true just before a weekend, vacation or holiday.

Cool Down

There's an old Chinese proverb that says, "Never write a letter when you're angry." The same holds true for criticism—never do it when you're mad or upset. Use whatever delaying process you can to put time between when you initially feel the need to criticize an employee and when you actually do it. You'll be more objective, your criticism will be more constructive and your overall employee communications will be vastly improved.

Conversely, don't wait too long to dispense the criticism after the poor performance has been identified. As with our

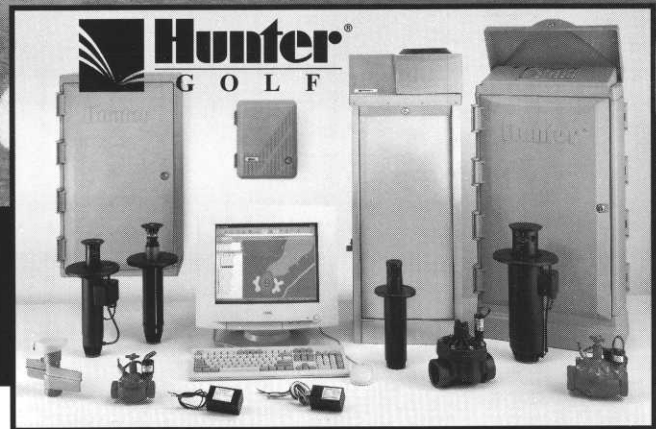
(Continued on Page 11)

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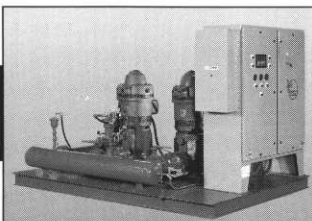
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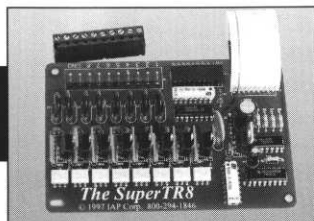
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