

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER

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From the Golf World

Word from Lawrence, Kansas, is that the Early Bird registration deadline for the upcoming national conference and show here in Washington February 5-13 has been extended to October 15. By signing up early, you get a 10% discount on all conference fees, a 25% discount on educational tapes purchased, and preferential banquet seating and seminar assignments.

MAAGCS treasurer Lee Dieter was in Lawrence on September 8 as a member of the GCSAA Nominating Committee, whose selection of candidate for the February 12 election will be announced later this fall.

There's always a lot of griping about the ex-football stars and basketball announcers who do TV golf commentary, so ABC's broadcast of the U.S. Amateur final in September was a refreshing change. The network had only golfers to do the verbal work, and Dave Marr and Bob Rosburg made up the team, with John Schroeder out on the course with the players. They kept the gab to a minimum, said what had to be said and said it well, and are to be commended,

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1984 Meeting Dates

October 9 – Maryland Golf and Country Club, Ron Hall, Host

November 13 – Hobbits Glen Golf Course, Bill Neus, Host

December 11 – Lakewood Country Club, Jerry Robine, Host

Basic Survival—Stress and the Superintendent

by Bill Smart, IBMCC

The general overall playability of a course is important to a golfer. He does not notice the technical turf problems that scream out to the superintendent day in and day out. We tend to get so caught up with the bad stuff, we overlook the acres of good stuff.

A buddy of mine said, "If I could only cut out the junk and put it in one corner, no one would ever notice it." The truth is that no one was paying any attention anyway. Did you ever hear that old saying, "When in trouble and in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout"? Well it doesn't work, everybody is so busy running and screaming in their own circles that you can't get their attention.

It is certainly your job to know your course, warts and all. However, there never was the perfect golf course and there never will be, it is just not the nature of the beast. There are too many things over which you have no control. Your desire for the perfect golf course could be termed a mild form of insanity.

One strong defense against stress is to enlist the help of the golfer with a good public relations program. How do you do this? . . . It has been talked about and written about for years. None of what I heard or read was my style. I do not give talks to the garden club, wear a three-piece suit, attend all the club functions, or greet everyone on the first tee on Saturday or Sunday. These have all been suggested and might help if you are so inclined. There is an easier and more rewarding way. It is simple, direct, and once you get the hang of it, a lot of fun. It is to talk to the golfer. Many turfmen treat the golfer as the enemy and avoid contact as if they had something catching. Talk to them, the good and the bad, the old and the young, the men and the women and anyone in between. My PR time (I ran away before I knew better) with the members is the most productive part of my day.

About 80% of the golfers are not adamant about the condition of the course; they will usually accept conditions as they find them without too much fuss. They will respond well to your PR attempts. Ten percent will accept any conditions and just don't care enough to even think about it. They will respond to a friendly 'Hi' and a few pleasant words. The 10% that are left you will really have to work on. This is the group that sometimes make you wish you had a 9 to 5 job in the office. They are usually very verbal, fair to good golfers, and communicate pretty well within the club and themselves. It is not easy to convert chronic bitchers, but it is well worth the effort and everyone should keep working at it. Select the loudest and strongest and project your public relations pitch to him — or her, as is sometimes the case. I won one over by the simple expedient of sitting down and having lunch with him. It ruined by lunch and my digestion, but with that start he is now one of my biggest boosters. Seems his biggest complaint was that no one listened to him — meaning me, the pro, and officials of the club. That was easy, I can listen like crazy. Of course, I have to put up with a 5-minute discussion everytime I see him, but that is a small price to pay for his good will. He has also done my PR work for me within the chronic bitching group. One really needs the support of this group when you encounter the other type of stress.

For want of any other name I will call it "Disaster Stress." This happens when your mistake is very obvious and right out there for all to see, and can't be passed off as a natural event such as bad weather or disease.

I had one happen to me in mid-season; the worst time. Early on there is a good chance that active growth will get you out of trouble. Late in the season the cool nights, warm days, and fall rains are very forgiving. Then too, you are doing renovation work anyway.

Before the current pesticide regulations we used some pretty potent chemicals. I used sodium arsenate to control weeds in sand traps. It was cheaper, killed in few hours, and also soaked through my sneakers and inflamed the skin under my toenails. My casual attitude about this has changed along with our chemicals. After one of these sprays, I sent one of my summer college students to rinse out the tank. In view of what happened, it is ironic that he was a chemistry major. My instructions were to spray the small amount of material in the tank into the brushy edge of the woods on the way to the pumphouse, rinse the tank out, then refill with water for the next use. A day or two later, I added fungicide to the tank and sent two men to apply it to the greens. The chemistry major had not rinsed the tank, merely filled it. The residue chemical in the tank was enough to brown out the first nine greens, which happened to be the back nine. Upon refilling, the dilution rate was so high the rest of the

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