



The Value of Mentoring

By Gry K. Carls, CGCS

Last week I visited Lawrence, Kansas for the GCSAA Education Committee Meeting. One of the items on the agenda that was discussed was the future of educational programs for the new generation of superintendents.

The superintendent of today has access to more technology than ever before. This technology can provide us with access to tremendous amounts of information without ever leaving our office. You can obtain a degree from the comfort of your home. There are those that believe that you can get everything you need from the internet and the experience of a face to face meeting will be less important in the future.

For many of us who started our careers in the 70's the greatest source of information was from our peers. We gathered at chapter meetings or the national conference to exchange information about what we had learned on our courses. Many

feel that with the new technology this is less important than it was in the past. Much of what I learned came from observing the success and failures of my peers. Although I have a formal education, there isn't a computer in the world that could have taught me half of what I actually learned working out on the golf course with my peers and mentors.

Does that mean that I don't believe the access to new technology is a valuable tool? There is tremendous value derived from computer access. As I stated earlier, there is a great deal of information out there, but you still need the advice of some wise peers to filter out the good information from the bad. Discussion forums such as can be found on the GCSAA or CGCSA websites can be a great source of information. Keep in mind that they can also be the source of a lot of misinformation. This is not to mean that the authors are

deliberately providing false information, only that each golf course is unique in many ways and what works one place may not work in your situation.

The greatest value of a peer or mentor network is assistance in sifting through all the information that is out there. I'm sure we all experienced the value of learning from others as we began our careers. It is also important to understanding the value of teaching those who follow us. I have felt fortunate during my career to work with or have the assistance of the wiser, more experienced superintendents. Perhaps the new generation of superintendents does not see this as important but it may be even more important now than it was 10 or 20 years ago. With all the information available out there it still comes down to one basic question, how does it work on my golf course? I still believe that most often, the answer to that question will come from a

mentor or peer.

We work in a business that is often as much art as it is science. By viewing the work of our fellow artists we are inspired to do new or different things. The valuable lessons learned by our peers will help us all avoid future pitfalls. We have all developed great friendships with our peers over the years and have mutually benefited from those relationships. To some of the younger guys out there, I urge you to attend chapter meetings when possible and seek information from your peers. Start to develop some of those friendships for the future. To those of us who have been around a little longer, try and take some time to meet the next generation of our profession. There is a lot of information and energy among the younger group that could have a positive effect on your outlook. As we all learn from each other, we will all benefit in the end.

Office Notes

Barb Mikel

November brings a more frantic pace in the office. Some of you are slowing but it is a busy time for the association. This year we are revising the renewal questionnaire. We hope to get more up-to-date information by sending the form separate from the bill. We are also providing a check-off section for subscription to California Fairways and the NCGA Handicapping program. Both are offered free to you with your membership in GCSANC, but not everyone realizes this after the first letter of acceptance into the association.

Please look for the renewal questionnaire, **FILL IT OUT** and **MAIL** or **FAX** it to the office. This information is compiled for the directory, so make sure you fill in all the information. Forward the renewal invoice to your accounting department for payment. A discount of \$20 may be taken if paid by this December 31, 2001, otherwise the entire invoice amount is due.

In addition, a bylaws change will be voted on November 5. It is my hope we have additional bylaw revisions for the January 2002 Annual Meeting. The

Affiliate "Commercial" and Affiliate "Non-Commercial" has never been clearly defined. We have many members that belong to the "brotherhood" of turf grass grower whom belong in the Associate classification. But there is a lack of clarity in the

current classifications. Hopefully this will be resolved in January. The legal requirements have been reviewed and look for material in the December newsletter plus a mailing to the voting membership.

Hospitality Suite

will be

Feb.7, 2002

at the

Universal Studios Orlando

from

6:00 to 8:30 pm.