

# CHIPS & PUTTS

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### A Place for Everything

By Christine Gurzler

There's something to be said for clichés. After all, there's usually a hefty measure of truth solidly behind them. They become clichés when they stop being buzzwords and get into everyday speech. One cliché I want to explore is "A place for everything and everything in its place." Now, stop groaning, I'm not your mother, and this isn't going to be an article about cleaning up your room. Rather, I want to talk about how this cliché can be applied to your schedule, your computer files, and your space.

Let's tackle your schedule first. By now, the story of the big rocks (Franklin Covey) is fairly well known. The analogy is that you schedule the big rocks, or most important things, before you schedule the smaller rocks, or the lesser important things in your life, and so on. By concentrating your efforts on the truly essential things you can enjoy not only greater Effectiveness, but also improved efficiency. By knowing what your true priorities are on a daily or weekly basis, you can be sure to allocate your time to the most vital activities. Large-scale projects should be broken down into small steps that can then be scheduled into your task list. Of course, everyone has times when it seems like all you do is move from one emergency to another, but generally speaking, by planning your work in advance and then working that plan, you will be far more likely to actually complete those projects that you set out to accomplish. There's much wisdom to be found in the Jewish reckoning of time, that each day begins at sundown. Think about it. If you plan the next day the night before, you have a jump on things in the morning. That's another good cliché – the one about not getting up on the wrong side of the bed. By going over your schedule before you go to bed each evening and making any adjustments then, you can sleep confidently and wake up ready to face whatever challenges the new day brings. The articles section of the Franklin Covey website (www.franklincovey.com) has a number of articles about planning your schedule, including a neat PowerPoint presentation that illustrates the Big Rocks story.

The second area of organization is your computer. For the golf course superintendent, the slower winter months are an ideal time to tidy up your computer files. Here especially, the cliché about "a place for everything and everything in its place" can really shine. Have you ever talked to a real computer geek or seen a TV show where the resident computer hacker complains about the files on the computer they need to check over for evidence? Does that sound like your computer? I'm all for using long file names that are fairly specific so you can find the document again, but did you know that you can save yourself a heap of trouble by spending some time creating file folders that pertinent documents can then be saved in? Of course, this is much easier to do when you have a brand spanking new computer, but it can be done at any time in the computer's lifetime. (Continued on page 3)



### President's Message......

For this month's message, I would like to share a few quick thoughts...

The Annual SNOW Meeting at Elk Mountain is being scheduled for Friday, February 8. This is the day after the PSU Northeast Show at the Woodlands in Wilkes-Barre. Remember, this meeting is open to everyone—friends, family, staff, and those that just want to come up for lunch and conversation.

We are getting close to finalizing next year's meeting schedule, and we will post that as soon as it is completed.

Finally, I would like to wish all our members, their families, and their staff an enjoyable and safe Holiday Season.

Darrin Larkin

### Editor's Notes.....

Greetings all. This is the final issue of 2007. How will the year be remembered by you? It is funny for me when I travel throughout NE PA to hear how things are so widely varied in just a few miles. Dollar spot here, none there! Hyperodes, Brown patch, Drought, Rain. Mother Nature sure can throw some wicked off speed stuff! Overall though I think this year was toward the easier side of the scale for most. Let's hope the early snow allows everyone the opportunity to rest up for '08.

With the holidays here, Valley Forge around the corner, the GIS just behind it and then the Northeast Show; The SNOW meeting may be poorly attended just because we have so much happening in such a short time! Let's not let that happen! This meeting is a great time for all. It is relaxed, casual, and fun! It is a great place to meet others that enjoy the same things you do, so make it a point to sign up and attend.

Once again, no articles, no pictures, no birth announcements. Please keep the Association in mind and send along any information that might be of interest. It is always welcome.

Happy Holidays to all and a Happy New Year!

Jim Gurzler



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### (Continued from Page 1)

First, when in My Documents, create the folders you need. Look over the contents of your documents folder. What documents can be grouped together? Do you need a place for daily reports? A place for expense reports? A file for newsletter articles? How about creating files for different articles dealing with varied aspects of your work? For example, you could have a folder for articles on irrigation, one for construction or restoration, another for turf diseases, another for equipment concerns, one related to issues concerning your crew. You can even create a general folder on articles and then include subfolders within it. The list goes on and on. Anything that you create documents for on a regular recurring basis is a good choice for a file folder. Don't think of "folders" as just folders. Think of them more as "file drawers" with "hanging folders" inside that the folders - your actual documents - get filed in. After you move any files to their new locations, be sure to update any software applications that depend upon those file paths. For example, if you use Documents to Go (Dataviz) on your PDA, you will need to remove each document you are syncing to your device and then add it to the application again so it will sync using the new file path. Make a note of what files you are moving so you can make those changes when you finish tidying your files. While you're taking the time to make these changes it's a good idea to make a back up of your entire Documents folder. Make a back up of any software patches or updates you've done in the last few months as well. Date and label these and file them away somewhere other than where you keep your computer. It's pretty useless to make a back up of your computer files and then store it in the same room as the computer. If an accident destroys the office, guess what happens to the back up files?

The final area to explore is your space. I know I said I wasn't going to harp on you to clean your room and I plan to keep my promise. My grandmother always said that not only should you return things to their proper place but that you should also use the proper tool for the proper job. In her home (and mine too), you didn't use a scissor that was for fabrics on paper or vice versa. Let's take that philosophy and apply it to the equipment shed and your office area. Just like grouping like files together under another file folder can organize your computer files, so can grouping like items in the workplace. Another important aspect of the organization is something I learned back in my interior design days ... put things where they are going to be used! It's inefficient to have to walk all over the place looking for something; it should be accessible both when and where you need it. If you never use catalogs in your maintenance area don't keep them there. Provide a shelf, or better yet, magazine racks for them. Train yourself to throw away the old one when the new one comes in. You can use a binder to archive each year's issues of the PTGA newsletter. Slap a sticker on the binding edge so you'll know which year is inside. You can use this technique for your catalogs from vendors too. Label each binder as to what kind of vendors are included inside then use subject dividers between each vendor's catalogs. If some of the catalogs for your vendors don't have holes punched in them already, Staples will do that for you for a nominal fee. Copy centers can also saw off the binding on a catalog and then drill the holes – something to consider for a very thick catalog. Another great organizational tool is the white board. You can quickly jot notes down and alert your staff to anything that they need to be aware of. It can also be used as a scheduling tool if you buy one with calendar blanks.

I could go on and on about the great tools available to help you get and stay organized and the joys of working according to plan but I'll leave you to find that out for yourself. Even if you never turn into an organizational diva (my husband calls it OCD) like me, I'm sure you'll agree that having your life function in a relatively predictable routine has its advantages.





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### Off season? What's that?

Presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

Many golf facilities have a nine-month golf season, which means they also have a period when the volume of play declines. So what type of activity does the golf course management staff engage in during the "offseason?"

While golfer activity may be virtually non-existent during the offseason, there is still much work to be done by the golf course superintendent and his/her staff. It should be noted that a golf course is staffed on a seasonal schedule to meet demand, thus temporary workers and/or student interns may not be available during the offseason to assist the full-time staff.

Depending upon weather conditions, a variety of golf course projects can be completed even though the temperatures are not conducive for member play. Such activities could include sodding bare areas with turf, renovating bunkers, rebuilding tee areas, trimming and planting trees, etc. These projects could close down portions of the course if undertaken during the playing season, therefore the offseason offers the opportunity to make improvements with little or no inconvenience. Whether or not there is play on the course, superintendents must be attuned to turf conditions. For example, allowing ice to sit on the turf for extended periods can result in turf winter-kill.

Various golf course accessories might also need repair. Benches, signs, water cooler containers, trash bins, ball washers, rakes, etc., may need to be built or renovated. Routine building maintenance on areas such as the clubhouse, turf care center, pump houses, green house, tennis center, etc., are often set aside for this time period. Again, delaying work on these areas until consumption patterns decline results in little interruption.

Equipment is also a focus for the golf course superintendent during this time period. Everything from purchasing to various mechanical repairs such as engine tune-ups and reel sharpening are on the schedule. Irrigation systems are in need of similar annual maintenance to ensure that they do not get damaged during extreme cold spells.

The offseason also provides the opportunity to complete a variety of business management responsibilities. Annual plans and budgets must be developed and then presented to the appropriate club leaders. Inventories for fertilizers, pesticides, seed and other supplies need to be replenished. Staffing plans must be developed and employees have to be secured for the golf season. Golf course managers should also review their course conditioning programs on annual basis. Issues such as turf selection, green speed, bunker sand characteristics, fairway widths and integrated pest management programs all require significant research and planning.

Staff development is also a requirement for golf course managers. Superintendents and assistants participate in regional education seminars and attend the GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show. These continuing education opportunities provide information on the latest management techniques, products and services available to course managers. The opportunity to network with peers and learn how others tackle challenges can result in significant benefits to a facility, some of which do not have a price tag.

For more information regarding golf course management practices, contact your local superintendent or the GCSAA at (800) 472-7878 or <u>www.gcsaa.org</u>.

### **Key points:**

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	A golf course is staffed on a seasonal schedule to meet demand.
	The offseason offers the opportunity to make improvements with little or no inconvenience.
	The offseason provides the opportunity to complete a variety of business management responsibilities
	Superintendents focus on equipment during this time period.
	Staff development is a requirement for golf course managers.

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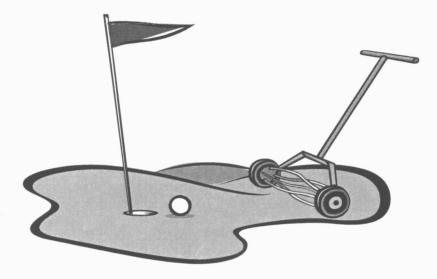
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### To Tree, or not to Tree

Presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

Have you ever wondered why golf course superintendents have what seem to be perfectly healthy trees removed at the course you play?

To the golfer, the biggest hazards on the golf course are bunkers, ponds, creeks and gullies. To the golf course superintendent, the biggest hazards on the golf course can be trees.

To hear one complain about trees is almost blasphemous. After all, poet Joyce Kilmer wrote that "poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree." It's not that superintendents dislike trees. To the contrary, one of the primary reasons superintendents choose the profession is because they enjoy working with the environment. In fact, golf course superintendents closely monitor the health of trees because they do enhance the environment and are an integral part of the golf course. Trees filter dust, lower temperatures by creating shade and provide wild-life habitat.

But the first responsibility for any superintendent is to provide a high-quality playing surface based on the available resources. Unfortunately, trees compete with turf for the basic nutrients needed to flourish – oxygen, water and sunlight. This battle is waged most often near putting greens and tees where trees often form an amphitheatre-like setting. As the trees encroach the closely cropped turf on the putting and teeing surfaces, they restrict airflow and sunlight while using up the available nutrients. To compensate, fans will be placed in these areas to aid air circulation, but sometimes that tactic is but a short-term solution. With apologies to Kilmer, even God could not grow grass on the golf course if he did not have a proper tree management program.

Perhaps unlike any sport, golfers have a special affection for their playing surface.

Golfers talk about golf courses with a reverence that should be reserved for a temple or shrine. Rare is there such admiration expressed for a tennis court, a soccer field or a basketball court. Because of their affinity for the golf course, golfers often cringe at the prospects of having trees trimmed or removed. After all, the tree could be a memorial to a friend or family member, it may have been planted by school children or its life may parallel that of the golfer. Whatever the reason, tree maintenance is not as easy as pulling the chainsaw cord. The most important part of a tree maintenance program may be communicating the reasons why such action is necessary.

Turf health is one issue and human health is another. Tree maintenance programs are important to reduce the risk of falling limbs that could potentially harm golfers. As a means to reduce their liability, some golf facilities have communicated and have enacted well-defined policies regarding tree risk reduction policies.

In addition to turf quality and safety, the strategy of play is frequently determined by trees. Golf course architects use trees to define boundaries such as separating fairways, creating doglegs, providing for depth perception and making challenges by blocking a certain angle of entry.

Continued on Page 6







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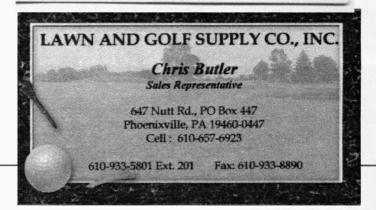
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### Continued from Page 5

Superintendents must take into account how the course

was intended to play before tree modifications or plantings are enacted. Often times the golf course designer is long gone after a course has matured and grown. Trees that did not affect the strategy based on the original layout mature and create shot making that is contrary to the original intent.

Despite the emotional attachment to trees, a well-planned and executed tree maintenance program often gains quick acceptance, even among the most ardent foes. Under the direction of the golf course superintendent and assisted by a golf course architect and skillful arborist, tree maintenance can be executed with the results being barely noticeable to even the keenest eye. In the end, all benefit as turf quality improves, safety is enhanced and the course plays in the manner in which it was intended.

For more information regarding golf course management practices, contact your local superintendent or the GCSAA at (800) 472-7878 or www.gcsaa.org.

### Key points:

- Superintendents closely monitor the health of trees.
- Trees filter dust, lower temperatures by creating shade and provide wildlife habitat.
- Trees compete with turf for the basic nutrients needed to flourish oxygen, water and sunlight.
- Tree maintenance programs improve turf quality and enhance safety.
- Tree maintenance can be executed with the results being barely noticeable to even the keenest eye.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year From the Board of the Pocono Turfgrass to all the Members and their Families.



Enjoy the Holidays and Be Safe!



Did You Know?

GCSAA Members can now access more than 80 years of GCM via the internet!

Through an agreement with Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information Center (TIC), GCSAA members now have access to the entire archive of Golf Course Management Magazine and its predecessor publications dating back to 1933. The archive gives GCSAA members nearly 80 years of turfgrass industry information available right at their fingertips.

Thank you again to all those clubs, companies, speakers, and host superintendents for making the 2007 meeting schedule such a great success. If you couldn't make any meetings in 2007 try your best to attend a meeting in 2008. The tentative schedule is full of great golf, fun speakers, and camaraderie among your peers.

2008 Tentative Venues

Lehigh Country Club Frosty Valley Country Club Three Ponds Golf Course Wyoming Valley Country Club Sugarloaf Golf Club Panorama Golf Course Elmhurst Country Club

Welcome - new member Bob Price, Superintendent, Edgewood in the Pines, Drums, PA

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### POCONO ROUNDUP

We have lost a great friend and colleague

Mark Hughes, Golf Course Superintendent of Monroe Country Club, Monroe, New York passed away recently while on vacation in Puerto Rico.

There has been overwhelming support and the family of Mark Hughes thanks everyone for their help and concern. A fund has been set up by Mark Kuhns to assist Lisa and her sons get through the tough times ahead. The fund is the "Mark T. Hughes Memorial Fund". Your help in getting this information out to the chapters in PA, NJ and New York would be greatly appreciated. Any chapters wishing this information are more than welcome to contribute. Thank You.

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GCSAA Education Conference and GIS Show Orlando, Fl January 28-February 2, 2008

**Northeast Turf Conference**, The Woodlands Resort Wilkes Barre, PA February 7, 2008

**SNOW Meeting Elk Mountain February 8, 2008**Contact Darrin Larkin for more info.



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