



Tee to Green

PUBLISHED BY THE METROPOLITAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT ASSOCIATION

Special Feature

Management Reminders for the Too-Busy-to-Be-Bothered

Easy-to-implement tactics for spurring your crew on through your busy season—and beyond

The first commandment of promoting top-notch work from your crew is to have clear performance goals for each worker; everybody should know exactly what is expected of them. The second commandment: Recognize and reward positive behavior.

These principles sound obvious, even simplistic. But what often happens is that superintendents become so preoccupied with getting through each day's pressures and problems—particularly during the golf season—that they lose sight of the small things they should be doing to promote positive behavior in their workers.

To see you through this management dilemma, we've put together

some basic—but essential—reminders that'll help you inspire your crew to strive for and maintain high levels of performance through the golf season—and every day after.

Reminder #1: State expectations. Aim high. Expect a lot from people, hold them accountable, and above all, give them regular and honest feedback on their performance—*always* detailing what they've done well and, when necessary, what they could have done better. (See Reminders #4 and #5.)

Reminder #2: Attach meaning to every task you assign.

When assigning a task—large or

small—don't leave your workers high and dry without a firm grip on *why* the job needs to be done, *why* he or she has been chosen to do it, or *what* its value is to you or the golf course.

Consider, for example, how differently a worker might react to these two statements:

1. "Jack, I want you to repair the sprinkler heads on the greens 2, 4, and 7. I need to have it done by Wednesday. Thanks."
2. "Jack, we'll be spraying on Thursday, and the material needs to be watered in. That means we've got to get those sprinkler heads on greens 2, 4, and 7 working before then. And I'd like you to do the job. You're the one guy I know I can count on to repair those heads properly and on time. Do you see any problem in having the job done by the end of the day on Wednesday?"

By assigning work the way the superintendent has in statement 2—with the *what* and *why* (continued on page 4)

President's Message

A New Committee, A Revived Event

What a wonderful conference we had this past February in Orlando. Aside from the near-perfect weather, hotels, and new convention center, the conference gave us all the opportunity to get acquainted with some exciting new golf course maintenance products and equipment, not to mention management techniques.

But just as important, the convention allowed us to touch base with colleagues across the country—and ocean—to discuss what they've been doing in their operations and associations to meet the increasingly complex challenges facing today's golf course professionals.

Our own association is already in the process of making one change in response to these new challenges. With GCSAA guidance, we'll be forming a Government Relations Committee. Chaired by Joe Alonzi, superintendent of Fenway Golf Club, the committee's express purpose will be to watchdog and respond to environmental issues and pending legislation affecting (continued on page 2)

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A New Committee, A Revived Event

our chapter members. But equally important, it will be the committee's job to keep our members and the GCSAA informed on what is going on locally with pesticide, water, and underground storage tank issues.

Though the committee's primary emphasis will be on New York area environmental concerns, it will also represent Connecticut and New Jersey and include a representative from each of those states' associations.

Another project the board is very excited about is the return of the annual MetGCSA Field Day. This fun educational event was held during the '70s not only to raise funds for the association, but also to allow our Class C members a day to show their wears at a central location.

Now called the Professional Turfgrass Field Day, this year's event is scheduled for September 18 at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY. Bob Lippman of Westchester Turf Supply, our newly appointed Class C representative to the Board of Directors, is the chairman of this committee. He and his committee members have been hard at work on this event since the beginning of the year. The committee plan is to invite *all* turf professional people in the Met area. Though a major undertaking, the enthusiasm coming from this group is a sure sign that this project will be a tremendous success.

These are just a few of the things we have in the works for 1990. There are more to come, and I'll be telling you about them to keep you up to date on what's happening with our association. In the meantime, please feel free to discuss your ideas with me at our monthly meetings, or give me a call. After all, our main goal is the betterment of our profession.

LARRY PAKKALA, CGCS
President

U pcoming Events

Early Notice on These Special Events

■ Summer Social: "Manhattan Skyline Dinner Cruise"

DATE: Tuesday, August 21

DETAILS: A repeat of last year's popular event, this evening of dinner and dancing will embark at the New Rochelle Harbor. Sailing the East River aboard a cruise ship, you'll enjoy spectacular views of Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty. Watch for further details as this evening of fun approaches.

■ Professional Turfgrass Field Day

DATE: Tuesday, September 18

PLACE: Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

DETAILS: See the President's Message, above, for details.

Two Tournaments

■ 1990 Poa Annual Golf Tournament

DATE: Monday, August 13

PLACE: Ridgeway Country Club, White Plains, NY

DETAILS: Sponsored by the MetGCSA and the New York State Turfgrass Association, this event is being run to benefit turfgrass research. More details to come.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL: Mike Maffei at 914-279-7179 (office) or 914-278-9436 (home).

■ The Autumn Classic

DATES: Wednesday and Thursday, September 24-25

PLACE: The Quechee Club, Quechee, VT

Note These 1990 Meeting Schedule Changes

■ July Meeting

DATE: July 24

PLACE: Ardsley Country Club, Ardsley, NY

HOST: George Pierpoint

■ Annual Meeting

DATE: November 15

PLACE: Country Club of Darien, Darien, CT

HOST: Tim O'Neill



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John Carlone Hosts First MetGCSA Golf Meeting of the Year

MetGCSA members, dust off your clubs. April 26, you'll be visiting the Middle Bay Country Club in Oceanside, LI, for the first golf meeting of the year.

Host superintendent John Carlone has been with Middle Bay since November 1985. During his nearly three-and-a-half year tenure, he's had the opportunity to oversee a \$1.2 million renovation program. Among the projects he's undertaken are rebuilding the courses 64 bunkers, building several new tees, enlarging two existing ponds and constructing a new pond, which involved installing 700 feet of new bulkheads.

But these aren't the only changes the club has seen over the years. Built in the '40s, the A.H. Tull-designed course was originally known as Oceanside Country Club. In the late '60s, the club sold some of its property, including a few of its golf holes, to a neighboring school. They then redesigned the course, building two new holes to replace the ones that were lost. At the same time, they constructed a clubhouse and changed the name from Oceanside to Middle Bay.

John came to Middle Bay from The Stanwich Club, where he worked as assistant to Scott Niven for two years. But his experience in golf course management doesn't stop there. John graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 1983 with a degree in Turf Management. During summer breaks from 1979 to 1981, John worked at Green Valley, a public course near his hometown in Port Smith, RI. In 1982, he did his summer placement

under Ted Horton, then superintendent of Westchester Country Club.

John's 17-year interest in golf—he started playing at 11—combined with a green thumb he acquired in the greenhouses of his father's florist business, eventually led him to pursue a career in golf course management.

He's been an active member of the MetGCSA, serving on the Board of Directors since 1986—first as a Class B representative, then chairman of the Social and Welfare Committee, and currently chairman of the Education Committee.

Aside from ice hockey, John's hobbies are job related. In his spare time, he enjoys a good round of golf and, most recently, experimenting with his new computer at work.

John and his wife, Leslie, live near the club in Baldwin, NY, and are expecting their first child this July.

TIM MOORE
Knollwood Country Club

Rutgers Accepting Applications

The Office of Continuing Professional Education has begun accepting applications for its two-year, 20-week Turfgrass Management Course. Interested individuals will need a *minimum of two years' golf course and/or turfgrass experience to be considered.*

For further information and applications for these programs, please contact: Registration Desk, Office of Continuing Professional Education, Cook College, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, 201-932-9271.

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Info Alert

Who to Call on Union Contracts

Joe Alonzi of Fenway Golf Club and Tony Grasso of Willow Ridge were appointed superintendent representatives to the Federation of Country Clubs. As reps to the Federation, they've been involved in negotiating the terms of the upcoming Local 32E union contract. Anyone with questions or comments should contact Joe, 914-472-1467, or Tony, 914-967-4035.

Management Reminders for the Too-Busy-to-Be-Bothered

of the assignment spelled out—you'll convey a sense of importance and urgency and help build the kind of motivation and commitment that translate into outstanding results.

Reminder #3: Establish a checkpoint system for monitoring major projects.

Think back for a moment on the number of times you've given an assignment that wasn't completed on time or that fell short of your expectations. If you're at all like the superintendents we talked to, the root cause of the foul-up probably had more to do with the way you *monitored* the assignment than with the innate capabilities of the worker assigned to the project.

Many superintendents trip up during the busy season when there are more projects going on than there's time to monitor. The solution? Map out a checkpoint schedule with the employee in charge of the project.

Specify:

- what you'll want to look at—the stone placement in a walk before the cement is laid in, the arrangement of the first row of shrubs in a planting bed, the spray pattern on the first green treated
- time and frequency of checkpoints—every morning, every hour, every other day
- method of monitoring—a spot check at the work site, a verbal update by the employee in charge, a written report

Establishing a schedule of checkpoints puts the burden on the employee—rather than on you—to initiate status updates and briefings. So you're more apt to catch variances before they develop into time-consuming, costly problems.

Another safeguard against disaster: Chart major projects on a schedule board so you'll have an instant picture of their status.

Reminder #4: Give credit where credit is due.

Employees who feel you recognize and value their work are far more likely to continue performing at or above standards. So make a point of including *positive feedback* in your managerial repertoire, and follow these steps when you give it:

1. *Cite a specific example.* To your workers, a vague, off-hand remark such as "Way to go" or "Nice work" will be about as meaningful—and motivating—as "Have a nice day." They need to know exactly what they did that pleased you and what specific behavior you value highly.

2. *Explain how the behavior benefited you, the operation, and/or the golf course.* Naming the positive effects that someone's performance has had on the work place makes it clear that the person's efforts *can* and *do* make a difference.

Here's an example of proper positive feedback: "I really appreciate your taking the initiative to get the shop organized, Bill. Now, none of us will

have to waste valuable time hunting around for the tools we need to get a job done. It'll also show green committee members who drop by that we run a well-organized and efficient operation."

Reminder #5: When performance isn't up to snuff, give prompt corrective feedback.

Without *immediate* feedback, workers will assume their work is fine—or that you don't care if it isn't—and bad habits will only get worse. To make your *corrective feedback* effective, it's important that you present it as an opportunity for improvement—not a personal attack. Just as critical, however, is that your feedback be detailed and specific. If you generalize in an effort to soften the blow, confusion may be the only result.

Another pointer: Limit your comments to job-related behavior that can be changed rather than criticizing people for lack of inborn traits or abilities. Using these steps will help your efforts:

1. *State merits.* Focus first on the aspects of a person's performance that you like. This increases the chance that your employee will accept your concerns, and it reinforces any desir-

Letter Bag

A Good-bye to Good Friends

Last year I left Hawthorne Brothers Tree Service and moved down here to Hilton Head. Unfortunately, events happened quickly for me last spring, and I never got to say good-bye to my many friends in the MetGCSA. I got to know many of you as friends through a business environment. I worked and played with most of you. My memories of taking care of trees on your golf courses and the Met meetings and golf events will always be with me. I learned a lot about golf courses and hope that I helped you learn about trees.

Things are going well down here on Hilton Head. I call my new company Low Country Tree Care, Inc. I have several crews, two bucket trucks, and the rest of the equipment needed. By spring, I'll be in my new maintenance garage and offices.

We joined Oyster Reef Golf Club and are building a new house along the 18th fairway of the course. It's tough playing golf year-round—even tougher is making money with my 12 handicap.

Hopefully, I'll be able to continue to be a member of the MetGCSA. Perhaps there is a Southern membership classification.

I wish you all well in the future. If you come to Hilton Head, stop by or call. My number is 803-681-TREE.

GARY R. MULLANE

Low Country Tree Care, Inc.

able behavior that exists. Be *specific* about the merits. Saying something as general as "This is really good" doesn't demonstrate what you'd like the person to continue doing.

2. *Specify your concerns.* Again, be *specific* in your feedback. Pinpoint exactly *what* was wrong with the performance, *how* and *where* employees deviated from standards, and *why* certain behavior isn't acceptable.

TIP: When making the transition from your merit statement, avoid using "but" or "however." These words have negative connotations and can make merit citations seem insincere.

3. *Express confidence in the employee's ability to do the work correctly.* It's a funny thing; when employees feel you believe in their abilities, they're apt to prove you right. But this step does more than just show employees that you believe in them, it also sees that they walk away from the feedback session without an ounce of animosity toward you.

Here's an example of good corrective feedback: "Susan, I know you worked

hard to get those greens mowed before the shotgun start. In fact, you've completed the job more quickly than I ever thought possible. What concerns me is on greens 7, 10, and 18, you missed areas, and that's going to affect how the greens putt. Now, I know that's not typical of your work. I know you can do better."

Aim high. Expect a lot from people, hold them accountable, and above all, give them regular and honest feedback on their performance.

Reminder #6: Use—and encourage—positive communication.

Honest, open communication creates positive energy. Here are a couple of pointers:

1. *Build questions from a positive premise.* All questions are not created equal. Those that control or limit an employee's response such as, "Don't you think you should have the crew...?"

"Wouldn't it have been better to...?" often spark a guilty, angry, or defensive reaction. Alternately, questions that elicit an employee's thoughts on a subject such as, "How do you feel about having the crew...?" "What do you think we should do in the future to avoid the problem of...?" show employees that you value and trust their input, which in turn encourages them to take initiative and responsibility for their actions.

2. *Encourage constructive nay-saying.* It's essential that your people feel they can voice their objections or concerns about a particular task or policy. But it's just as important that they do it in a constructive, problem-solving way—namely by offering a solution for every concern they present. Encouraging employees to take charge in clearing away problems—particularly the ones they point out—is one of the best morale enhancers around.

This material is adapted from the Learning International programs Planning and Directing Performance and Interpersonal Managing Skills. Learning International is a leading provider of sales and management training headquartered in Stamford, CT.

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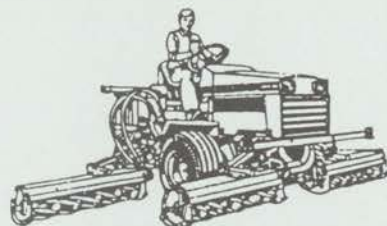
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In Memoriam of Molly Strazza

The MetGCSA loses a founding father and life member

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Emilio "Molly" Strazza, one of the founding fathers and a life member of the MetGCSA. Molly, as he was known in golf circles, spent 42 years as superintendent of the Round Hill Club in Greenwich, CT.

Originally a sculptor in New York City, Molly was one of those to carve the lions that grace the entrance to the New York Public Library. When failing health caused him to put down his chisel and hammer and seek outdoor work, he moved to Greenwich. An employee of Round Hill Club since its inception, Molly was instrumental in the golf course's construction and, before its completion, became superintendent, a position he held until 1964 when he retired.

Molly died December 20, 1989 and is survived by a brother and sister and his wife, Grace, and daughter, Carolyn. For those who wish to send their condolences, his wife and daughter's address is: 409 Riversville Rd., Greenwich, CT 06831. Donations may be sent to the Greenwich Boys and Girls Club, 4 Horse-neck Lane, Greenwich, CT 06830.

Births

Nicholas Triner to Scott and Dana Niven, February 27, 1990. Scott is property manager at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT.

New Members

- Steve Kopach, Class A, Mountain Ridge CC, West Caldwell, NJ
- David Laurie, Class B, Scarsdale GC, Scarsdale, NY
- Greg Moore, Class B, Rockrimmon CC, Stamford, CT
- Tom Watroba, Class D, Student

Members on the Move

- Bruce Cadenelli took over as superintendent at Caves Valley, Worthington, MD. Previous position: superintendent, Hollywood GC, Deal, NJ.
- Al Caravella took over as superintendent at Yardley CC, Yardley, PA. Previous position: superintendent, Green Brook CC, North Caldwell, NJ.
- Gina Gatto took over as superintendent at Falls View GC, Ellenville, NY. Previous position: assistant superintendent, The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT.
- Harry Nichol took over as superintendent at Atlantic City CC, North Field, NJ. Previous position: superintendent, Burning Tree CC, Greenwich, CT.
- Mark Sinto took over as superin-

tendent at Madison GC, Madison, NJ. Previous position: assistant superintendent, Pelham CC, Pelham Manor, NY.

■ Bob Tosh took over as superintendent at Hollywood GC, Deal, NJ. Previous position: superintendent, Manchester CC, Bedford, NH.

■ Lou Zahra took over as superintendent at Briar Hall CC, Briarcliff Manor, NY. Previous position: assistant superintendent, Briar Hall CC.

Congratulations

■ Steve Cadenelli of Metedeconk National GC in Jackson, NJ, was elected vice president of the GCSAA during the association's annual meeting in Orlando, FL, on February 26. Steve has served as a director on the GCSAA board since 1986. During that time he chaired the Education, Certification, Communication, and Finance committees. In 1989, he was also secretary/treasurer. Now, as VP, Steve is chairing the Planning Committee.

■ A hoorah for MetGCSA members Ray Beaudry (Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT), Ted Maddocks (CC of Fairfield, Fairfield, CT), and Mike Reeb (CC of New Canaan, New Canaan, CT) who were among the Connecticut GCSA #5 team members to win the Frank Lamphier Trophy at the 1990 GCSAA Golf Championship in Orlando, FL. The Frank Lamphier Trophy is reserved for the winner of the net division of the chapter team competition.



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