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# TEE TO GREEN



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Superintendents Association

## President's Message

### Working the Network

It's that time of year again when we go from running seven days a week, nonstop for 90 hours, to five days a week for a more reasonable 40 hours. Adjusting takes a little time, for our bodies, and the people around us. Much of that "found time" can be devoted to our families, as well as ourselves.

It's also a good time to reflect on the past season. Was it a good one: for you, the course, and your crew? How could you make it better?

One key to improvement—professionally and personally—is to take the time to network.

The dictionary defines networking as "an informal system whereby persons having common interests or concerns assist each other, as in the exchange of information or the development of professional contacts." This is something that's probably easier to do in the off-season, but more essential—and helpful—when you're in the heat of battle.

#### The Network at Work

As you know, there are a lot of ways to network. This time of year, there are tons of educational events—seminars, conferences, supplier-sponsored product updates—where you can share information and ideas with fellow superintendents. Take our (continued on page 2)

## Special Feature

### Dealing With Difficult People

*Superintendents' Guide to Working With—and for—Problem Personalities*

If you're a superintendent, you've most certainly had the displeasure of working with a difficult person or two. Whether it's a green chairman, board member, general manager, golf pro, or crew member, difficult people all seem to have one thing in common: They're skilled at making your work life—and usually other people's lives—pretty miserable.

When you encounter a difficult type—particularly if it's a boss—at first you probably amble along, unsure of the problem's source ("Is it me?"). You may even be mystified about why you feel so whipped all the time. Then a light will go off when someone finally asks you, "How do you deal with a jerk like that?"

To help you recognize—and cope with—a problem personality, here's a guide to seven tough-to-work-with types, along with some friendly counterattacks. They come straight from psychologist Robert M. Bramson and his book *Coping With Difficult People*.

Keep this handy. Even if you're not in the throes of a personality challenge right now, it's only a matter of time that one of these "characters" knocks on your door.



#### Hostile-Aggressives

This is a bully who attempts to cow and overwhelm others. Cutting remarks, tantrums, and verbal aggression are this type's specialty. To complicate matters, Bramson identifies three subtypes of the Hostile-Aggressive:

- *The Sherman Tank:* These people have a strong need to be right and will indiscriminately roll over people to prove the point. These characters expect you to run screaming in confusion after the first volley.

Don't do it. Hold your ground. Wait them out. Some will respect you for it; most will at least leave you alone and seek easier prey.

(continued on page 4)

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- ⑨ Winter Seminar Exhibitors Recognized



## Working the Network

Winter Seminar January 7. Nearly 200 area turf professionals attended, and believe me, there were plenty of opportunities for discussions there.

Participating in one of the many GCSAA and Tri-State Turf Research Foundation-sponsored research opportunities can also provide access to some of the latest thinking in our field. It gives us exposure to the practices and results of superintendents in other parts of the country. Some of our members have traveled much of the world because of the professional network they've developed.

During the season, there's the added opportunity to attend association meetings and social events. And then, there's always lunch. You have to eat, so why not share that time with a colleague—or supplier—and catch up on what's happening.

Time spent with your suppliers is time well spent. They can be a fund of information about what's going on in the area. And I'm not talking about gossip. They have good insight into how other superintendents have dealt with various turf issues, and what products have worked well to solve specific turf problems—maybe one you're grappling with.

With a network of superintendents and suppliers in place, those turf

problems—the ones you just can't diagnose, from time to time—are a lot easier to solve. I can remember the time one of my putting greens had a disease I couldn't identify. I called a few superintendents in the area, and before I knew it, there were six of us standing around trying to diagnose the problem. You know the old adage, "two heads are better than one." Well, I had three times that many, and together, we identified the disease, and I was able to treat it quickly and cost-effectively.

### It's a Two-Way Street

By working the network, I've also been able to show my club officials many different golf courses and conditions in the area. This has helped them understand the difference that maintenance practices and funding can have on playability.

We all know these club officials talk to one another and compare their course conditions with others in the area. Sometimes, their perceptions aren't favorable. We can help each other by sharing what we've heard—good or bad. This is one example where the network can really make a difference.

The network, after all, is a two-way street.

EARL F. MILLETT  
President



### FYI

## GCSAA Web Site Redesigned With Better Service in Mind

To better service the GCSAA membership and others in the golf industry, GCSAA has expanded its Web site to include a media section, which will allow media access to the latest information in the golf course maintenance/management industry.

Launched at the Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim, the new site also has expanded its public areas, allowing users access to GCSAA research information; the first phase of the GCSAA store; the Online Buyer's Guide; *Golf Course Management*; golf and the environment; golfer information on turfgrass terminology, alternative spikes, and etiquette; golf course management career opportunities; and a host of other topics.

According to analysts, the GCSAA Web site rates well above average for associations in terms of use by its members. You can join the growing number of Web site users on <http://www.gcsaa.org>.

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# MetGCSA Meeting/Golf Events at a Glance



## MetGCSA Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 11  
The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT  
Host: Jon Jennings, CGCS

## Two-Ball Qualifier

Monday, April 27  
Powelton Club, Newburgh, NY  
Host: Bob DeMarco

## Superintendent/Manager Tournament

Monday, May 11  
Elmwood Country Club, White Plains, NY  
Host: Scott Tretera

## Invitational Tournament

Monday, June 1  
Sunningdale Country Club, Scarsdale, NY  
Host: Sean Cain

## MetGCSA Championship/Met Area Team Championship Qualifier, Round 1

Monday, July 27  
Mahopac Golf Club, Mahopac, NY  
Host: Scott Ferguson

## Poa Annual Tournament

Monday, August 31  
Rock Spring Club, West Orange, NJ  
Host: Wayne Remo, CGCS

## MetGCSA Championship/Met Area Team Championship Qualifier, Round 2

Monday, September 14  
Burning Tree Country Club, Greenwich, CT  
Host: Gary Glazier

## Northeast Autumn Classic

Sunday – Tuesday, September 27 – 29  
Quechee, VT

## Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament

Monday, October 5  
Woodway Country Club, Darien, CT  
Host: Larry Pakkala, CGCS

## Annual Class C Outing

Tuesday, October 6  
Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY  
Host: Tom Watroba  
(Special Note: The field is limited, so sign up early!)

## Met Area Team Championship

Tuesday, October 13  
Connecticut Golf Club, Easton, CT  
Host: Mark Fuller, CGCS

## MetGCSA Annual Meeting

Date in November TBA  
Site TBA



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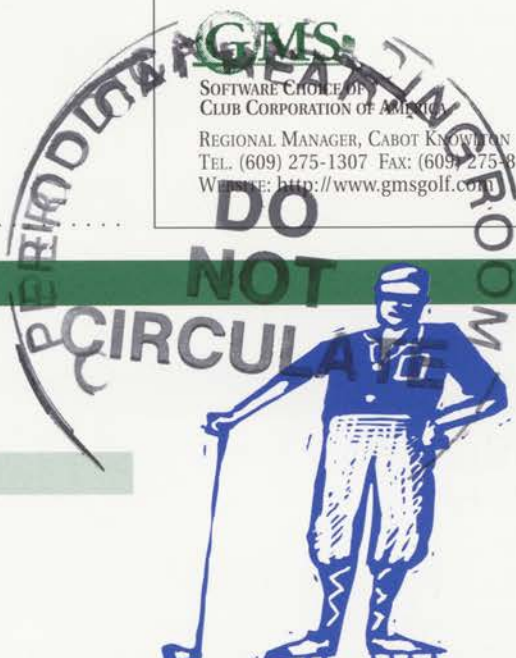
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## Upcoming Events

### Meeting Reminders

#### MetGCSA Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 11  
The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT  
Host: Jon Jennings, CGCS

#### Two-Ball Qualifier

Monday, April 27  
Powelton Club, Newburgh, NY  
Host: Bob DeMarco

## Educational Opportunities

### New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show

Tuesday – Thursday, March 3 – 5  
Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI  
*Pre-Show GCSAA Seminar: Construction and Maintenance of a Chemical Storage Facility*  
Monday, March 2  
Presented by The New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation in cooperation with URI and the UMass Extension, this conference promises an exciting educational session and turf show, featuring speakers on the cutting edge of turf management and more than 300 exhibitors with the latest in equipment, products, and supplies.

For further information, contact the show office at 401-848-0004.

### GCSAA Seminar: Improving Employers' Understanding of Golf Course Management: The Key to Golfer Satisfaction and Facility Profitability

Saturday, March 14  
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY  
Held in conjunction with the MetGCSA, this GCSAA seminar is a must for all golf course superintendents. Most effective if attended with your green chairmen or general manager, this seminar is designed to help you better communicate information about the daily operations of your course.

Among the topics covered: environmental challenges, achieving course goals, and the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and the green chairman/general manager.

For further information, contact GCSAA at 800-472-7678.

### USGA Regional Conference

Tuesday, March 24  
Albany Marriott, Albany, NY  
Held in conjunction with the Northeastern GCSA, this seminar will feature talks from renowned agronomists, USGA Green Section directors, and other industry experts on such topics as "Is Breeding Poa a Good Idea?" "Saving Old Greens With New Drains," "Timely Tips for Tolerating Traffic," and "The Internet: An Electronic Resource for Everyone."

For further information, contact James Farrell, the USGA's Northeast Region Manager, at 401-295-5430.



## Dealing With Difficult People

• **The Sniper:** These types use innuendoes, calculated digs, and unfunny teasing to cut you down. This one requires a face-off. A response like, "That sounded like a dig. Was it?" will force the Sniper to engage you in open battle or back off.

• **The Exploder:** These people respond to thwarted plans with a temper tantrum, generally an uncontrollable outburst that must run its course. Wait this one out, but show some empathy. For instance, to an explosive green chairman you might say, "I can see that project is important to you, and it's important to me too. I'll be happy to discuss it with you, but I'd rather not do it this way."

When all else fails, suggest that you continue your conversation another time.

### Complainers

Chronic complainers gripe incessantly but never try to do anything about the object of their irritation. Instead, they claim powerlessness and blame others for the problems they see all around

them. They never take responsibility and always use words like "never" and "always."

Don't agree with complainers; they will "Ain't-it-awful" you to distraction. Acknowledge their complaints, and ask for specifics. Move them toward problem solving by asking, "How would you like this discussion to end?"

### Clams

Not to be confused with strong, silent types, people who are "silent and unresponsive" make life miserable by almost—but not quite—imitating the dead. They do it through a combination of "Yes," "No," and "If you say so" responses to your questions and assertions. They also practice that old standby: malicious obedience. They follow your request to the letter, while violating the spirit and intention.

Coping with clams requires a sharp clam knife and an insistent manner. Open-ended questions and a friendly, silent stare have been known to work. When all else fails, tell clams what you plan to do and what your plan assumes

about their needs, thoughts, and wishes.

### Super-Agreeables

People in this category are so desperate to be liked they'll agree with everyone—including those who hold diametrically opposing viewpoints. Trouble is, if you need to depend on a Super-Agreeable in tough times, you're out of luck.

Coping with the spineless involves helping them feel safe enough to disagree and promising, at least implicitly, that they won't be placed in the middle of a clash of wills. Be wary of what seem to be unrealistic commitments from these types; they invariably are.

### Negativists

These wet blankets of the world see the forces around them as out of control and all those in power as untrustworthy hipshooters. Their most common responses to new ideas: "Nope. Won't work around here," or "Heard they tried that



### Info Alert

## Nomination Time Is Here

**T**he Awards Committee is looking for nominations for two of our most prestigious awards: The John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award and the Sherwood A. Moore Award.

Initiated in 1986, the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to a metropolitan area resident "who has demonstrated a knowledge of—and commitment to—the game of golf and the science of golf course management."

Past Reid Award winners are Dr. Patricia Vittum, Dr. Richard Skogley, Arthur Weber, Jim McLoughlin, Frank Hannigan, Geoffrey Cornish, Dr. Haruo Tashiro, Dr. Ralph Engel, Ken Venturi, Al Radko, and Guido Cribari.

The Sherwood A. Moore Award is reserved for a superintendent who has "advanced the professional image, status, and reputation of the golf course superintendent."

On the growing list of Moore Award recipients is Pat Lucas, Mike Maffei, Ted Jozwick, Bob Alonzi, James Fulwider, Bruno Vadala, Ted Horton, and Sherwood Moore, himself.

*The Awards Committee needs your nominations by April 15!* So don't delay in contacting Awards Committee Chairman John O'Keefe, 973-694-0260, with your list of candidates.



## Get Your Scholarship Applications

**A**pplications are now available for the 1998 MetGCSA scholarship awards. The Scholarship and Research Committee will select recipients based on leadership, maturity, scholastic capabilities, activities, and commitment to a chosen career.

To be eligible, a candidate must be a Class A, AL, B, C, AF, or AFL member of the MetGCSA or a dependent of a member. You can receive an application form by contacting S & R Chairman John Carlone at The Meadow Brook Club, 516-935-6505.

*The deadline for submissions is April 30.* Scholarships will be awarded at the July 27 Met meeting at Mahopac Country Club.



over at XYZ course, and it didn't work."

Don't rush nay-sayers. Bring them up to speed slowly so they can work out the logic of your proposal. Let them point out possible problems they see, and don't argue with them when they do. Just ask them how they would solve the problem. But don't ask them anything before they are comfortable with your basic idea.

#### Know-It-Alls

They think they're smarter than you and want you to acknowledge their superiority. Pomposity and condescension are their stock-in-trade. Know-it-alls come in two varieties:

- **Bulldozers:** These are genuine experts with an attitude problem. They are competent, careful people who make plans and carry them out, despite great obstacles. They just have very little need—or use—for other people.

Coping with bulldozers starts with doing your homework and respecting their expertise. You can question the dozer's work, as long as you don't try to pose as a counter-expert. If you must confront one, do it alone and in private.

- **Balloons:** These are bogus experts who pose as the real thing. They have an overwhelming need to be respected as supreme authorities. They usually know something about the subject matter in question—sometimes they genuinely believe they have expertise.

Cope with them by calling their bluff, but be sure to leave them an out.

Present the "true" facts as a alternate set of possibilities for them to consider.

#### Indecisives

These stallers differ from Super-Agreeables in one important respect: They honestly don't feel they have come to a "right" decision on an issue and won't let go until they feel 100 percent,

irrefutably correct—which, of course, means never.

Indecisives frequently get stuck between doing what is right and what will please. They prefer to bank on time and tides to make the decision or to make the need for a decision go away.

Sometimes, you can push them off the dime by asking for their ideas in priority order. They need your support, but be careful not to overload them. When it's a subordinate you're dealing with, keep the action steps in your hands.

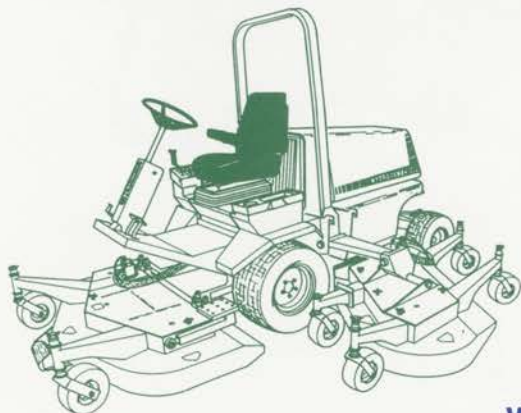
#### One Final Thought

Keep in mind, difficult people are not *really* as common as *Poa annua* in our fairways. So if you find that everywhere you go you're always surrounded by "difficult types" and you're constantly being forced to strike back at them or correct their behavior, guess what? It could be *you* who's got the problem!

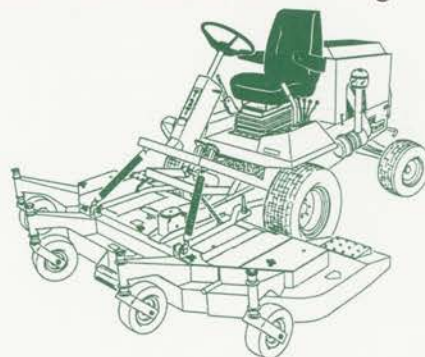


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## Congratulations to Our Environmental Steward Award Winners!

**T**he MetGCSA is proud to have in its midst three superintendents honored in 1998 with a GCSAA Environmental Steward Award. **Joe Alonzi** of Westchester Country Club, **Ted Horton** of Pebble Beach Company, and **Scott Schukraft** of Huntsville Golf Club were among 17 regional winners recognized for their expertise in environmental issues and turfgrass management.

This year, 33 superintendents in all will receive either a national, regional, or merit award at GCSAA's International Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim. This award is reserved for golf course superintendents who have demonstrated overall course management excellence, outstanding programs to maximize pesticide and fertilizer efficacy and irrigation and equipment efficiency, as well as wildlife preservation and enhancement.



## Four Met Members Become Ambassadors for the Green Industry

**I**n December, four Met members participated in training that marks their official entrance into the year-old Ambassador Speakers Program, sponsored by GCSAA, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, and RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment).

This joint outreach program is designed to motivate and prepare industry representatives to educate the public about the green industry's environmental benefits and to address consumer concerns.

Met members **John Carlone** of The Meadow Brook Club, **Les Kennedy** of CC of Waterbury, **Tim O'Neill** of CC of Darien, and **Jeff Weld** of the Bayer Corporation were among the 16 new recruits whose mission it will be to speak to area civic groups and schools.

"Establishing golf course superintendents and lawn care operators as environmental resources within the community increases the public's understanding about environmental issues and, more importantly, encourages the public to become environmental stewards in their own activities," says GCSAA President Paul McGinnis of Alta Measa Country Club in Meas, AZ. He adds, "GCSAA is pleased to share in this opportunity to educate golfers and nongolfers about the benefits of the green industry."

## And the Mystery Raffle Winner Is . . .

Due to a printer's error, the lucky winner of our 1997 Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the December 6 Ridgeway Country Club Christmas party, was omitted. OOOPS!

Congratulations, again, to our \$1,000-grand-prize-winner, **Greg Nicoll**, superintendent of Maplewood Country Club!

## Special Thanks Are in Order . . .

The **Bayer Corp.** has made a donation to our Scholarship Fund in the names of **Bert Dickinson**, CGCS (Willow Ridge CC), **Peter Rappoccio**, CGCS (Silver Spring CC), **Steve Renzetti**, CGCS (Wykagyl CC), **Jeff Scott**, CGCS (Tamarack CC), and **Scott Stark** (Fenway GC). These guys opted to forgo the complementary rainsuit and donate to our fund. We thank you!



### Births

Congratulations to Alpine, the Care of Tree's **Mike Cook** and his wife, **Lisa**, on the birth of their daughter, **Julia**, on September 28.

### Members on the Move

**Ernie Steinhof** is a new sales representative with Lesco, Inc. Previous position: Superintendent, The Nevele Hotel & Country Club, Ellenville, NY.

### Special Recognition

Congratulations to **Steve Colangeli** for earning his club—Aspectuck Valley CC—the distinction of becoming a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. This hard-won honor is awarded to those who have met a rigorous set of criteria in providing a sanctuary for wildlife on their golf course property.

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## The Winter Seminar: It's Worth Repeating

This year's MetGCSA Winter Seminar was so outstanding, we felt it was worth repeating. The nearly 200 who attended this annual event on January 7 were treated to an all-star lineup of speakers—thanks to the efforts of Will Heintz and his Education Committee.

Also on hand were 23 exhibitor booths (see accompanying piece on page 9), allowing members to meet with our supportive local vendors.

Another event highlight: The John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony, honoring Dr. Patricia Vittum, UMass's Department of Entomology program director. Recovered among Met members as the "Bug Lady," Dr. Vittum's groundbreaking research has offered important insight into the turf-devastating *Hyperodes weevil*.

What follows is a quick recap on this annual event.

### Dr. Gail Schumann, the University of Massachusetts: "Anthracnose and Other Troublesome Diseases"

Dr. Schumann introduced the CD-Rom she developed with James McDonald, walking us step-by-step through how this practical tool is useful in identifying—and drawing up a plan of attack for—various turf diseases.

We also saw how the program might be useful as a teaching device for assistants and students not familiar with the diseases common to golf course turf.

Equally enlightening was Dr. Schumann's discussion of the devastating effects of anthracnose on turf. She offered insight into not only the environmental stresses that beckon the disease, but also the cultural practices that help keep the disease at bay.

### Dr. Bridget Ruemmele, University of Rhode Island: "Answering Pointed Questions About Golf Shoe Spikes and Their Alternatives"

Dr. Ruemmele discussed her ongoing research on the effects golf shoe spikes and their alternatives have on turf.

As you might expect, the shoes that created the greatest damage were metal

spikes. The shoes creating the least amount of damage were the one-piece molded soles since the golfer's weight is evenly distributed over the entire area of the sole.

But also a factor in the wear-and-tear shoes create is the manner in which golfers walk and turn their footing on the green surface.

It's no surprise that Dr. Ruemmele found shrinking the size of the metal spike from 8 millimeters to 4 reduces the amount of wear considerably. More interesting is that the alternative plastic and ceramic spikes, while not causing the tearing and penetrating damage of the metal spikes, tend to cause bumpiness in the putting surface, particularly in the spring and fall, when greens are generally softer.

The net out: Metal spikes, in any form, are the most turf-damaging shoe. If turf protection is your prime concern, the molded shoe is still your best bet.

### Tom Meeks, Director of Rules and Competition, the USGA: "The Superintendent and the Rules of Golf"

Meeks offered important insight into the integral role the superintendent plays in preparing and marking the golf course for daily tournament play. The superintendent knows better than anyone the conditions of the golf course and, therefore, will be best able to mark hazards and other conditions that are on the course.

Meeks showed graphic examples of what can occur if the golf course is marked incorrectly. He also discussed some of the problems that occur when local rules, which are in conflict with the rules of golf, are instituted at courses.

### Dr. Joseph Vargas, Professor of Botany and Plant Pathology, Michigan State University: "Pesticides, Perceptions, and Politics"

Dr. Vargas exposes the many public misperceptions surrounding pesticides. He presents scientific data showing that many of the medications and household products we use are derived from the same chemical families as the pesticides

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applied to lawns and golf courses.

He also points to research that demonstrates how some of the everyday items we consume, such as tobacco, alcohol, and even pepper, are more toxic than many pesticides we apply to our turf.

He points out that pesticides can now be measured in parts per million, billion, and even trillion. In that amount, he notes, the pesticide content would be the equivalent of a grain of sand in a sandbox.

He concluded by emphasizing the

importance of continuing our efforts to educate the public about the safety of pesticides. We can't let uninformed, and vocal groups, distort the facts, he says.

**Lee Mangum, Audubon International: "The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses"**

Mangum explained the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, reviewing the criteria golf courses must meet to become certified cooperative sanctuaries. Though the specifications might, at first glance, seem ambitious,

Mangum stressed that they're attainable. Doing a little at a time is what generally works best, he advises, pointing to the program's many benefits. Topping the list is demonstrating to the public that golf courses and their managers are sensitive to the environment and wildlife.

He concluded his talk by offering a plan for involving area schools in your golf course's environmental efforts so children might begin learning how to nurture and enhance their environment.

**JON JENNINGS, CGCS**  
The Patterson Club

## Special Thanks to Our Winter Seminar Exhibitors

**A**s a special thank you to the exhibitors who participated in our Winter Seminar event, we've put together this directory with their names, areas of specialty, and phone numbers.

We hope you'll clip and save this sheet and, when the opportunity arises, show these contractors and suppliers the same support they showed us during our Winter Seminar—and throughout the year.

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