



THE NEWSLETTER

February 2016

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund – Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

How to be a Good Listener

Most people, and I'm no different, just want you to listen to them. Listening is an extremely important skill in life. Have you ever found yourself in a conversation with someone where you make the mistake of being solely focused on your next question, so that the current answer sometimes went in one ear and out the other?

Listening will help you in almost every aspect of your life. It will make you a better leader, a better superintendent, a better spouse, a better sales person, and it will instantly make you more likable and a popular person at a meeting or a party.

Think about this for a few seconds. Who would you rather be with – a good talker or a good listener? I try to be a good listener, but sometimes that's not easy for me. I tend to ask a lot of questions of people I meet for the first time and I have to guard against being taken for a person who is nosy. It's just that I have a curiosity and a genuine desire to get to know people better. Even though I sometimes appear to talk too much I do so only so I can gather information that I believe helps me get to know people better. I want to be a good listener.

So how do you listen well? I find these three things go a long way in connecting with people:

1. Mirror people's words. It sounds counterintuitive, because repeating other people's words back to them makes it seem as if you're not paying attention to them. But I can't tell you how many times I've seen people's eyes light up when you repeat their words back to them, as in: "This app is going to revolutionize the way people view weather forecasts for turf management," to which you would say, "This is going to revolutionize the way people view weather forecasts for turf management? How?" to which the person would reply, "Yes! So glad you asked...." You've made an instant friend.

2. Ask questions. How many conversations have you been in where someone says something completely nonsensical and you just let it pass because it's actually more work to make them explain their point than to let him or her talk on. Next time, make a point to stop the conversation and ask

about the point of confusion. It will not only create a more dynamic connection, it will also signal to the person that you're actually listening. Chances are, when you're stuck with someone who's talking endlessly, even he or she knows you're not completely paying attention.

3. Stop looking around the room. At the Golf Industry show in San Diego this year I met a vendor I wanted to talk with and I thought might want to talk with me. Well, I was totally insulted. Not by what the person said after I introduced myself. Rather by the total, I mean total, lack of eye contact and direct concentration on me or what I had to say. After he took an electronic picture of the code on my badge, he immediately looked behind and around me to see who might be approaching his booth. What a letdown! He didn't even make believe that he was interested in me or what I had to say. It's not that I'm anyone special or important. It's that the total disregard for what I had to say has formed an indelible impression that will stick with me and influence my future dealings with this person. So, to me, it is extremely important to concentrate on the person you're talking with. Do not look over their shoulder!

Have you noticed during live television interviews the intensity of it - two people are literally staring at each other for five minutes straight talking, sometimes tensely. The problem is, in real life, nobody talks to each other that way. Most of us are half engaged in our conversations, thinking about what we want to eat, or the work on our desk or a project taking place on the course. At cocktail parties, many of us find ourselves looking over the shoulder of the person in front of us to see who's around. Stop looking around the room physically or looking around the room in your brain. Five minutes spent fully engaging with one person as if he or she is the only thing in the room at the moment is worth 10 times more than 15 minutes half-heartedly talking on about the dullest subjects. ❖

By Don Hearn

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**Save the Date: May 16th, 2016
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Thoughts From Your Association Manager

During my time at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego this year I realized how important the commercial side of our business really is. While walking the show floor and viewing all the offerings of the many companies and seeing the amount of company representatives in each booth, I fully realized the commitment each had to spend their time and money to be there.

Many years ago, as a young superintendent, I didn't realize the importance of our industry and business partners - the people and companies who support us. I took for granted the companies I did business with. I didn't realize the investment they had made to provide service and products to me.

At one time I even tried to convince a supplier that he was charging way too much for parts I could purchase at the local auto store. Jeez, talk about a misguided viewpoint! I looked at the price, and thought nothing of the service and their support - how foolish.



A small portion of the 2016 GIS Show Floor

It doesn't matter which Association you may be familiar with, virtually all, if not all, have sponsors. Those sponsors are the companies whose logos are on signs, posters, table tents, newsletters, websites, clothing and just about anything a logo can be applied to. In many cases their investment is significant. These are the companies that support our Association and our Members. Sure, some will say that's the way it's supposed to be. To a certain extent that's true. But it's also true that our business should not be a lopsided venture with the extra weight carried by the company providing you a service.

Keep in mind the companies that support and advertise with the GCSA of New England expect a return for their expenditure. To think otherwise is naïve. They also know they can't have everyone's business. To expect that is also naïve. But, they do expect to have the attention of our members and be recognized for their support. They also expect to be treated with respect, not to be taken advantage of and to be dealt with in an honest manner. Frankly, that's no more than treating people the way you would want to be treated.

The next time you're looking for a company to make a purchase from or provide a service, look no further than the back pages of the NEWSLETTER. Virtually all the companies doing business in our world are listed there.

In the February issue of GOLF BUSINESS, the official publication of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) there was an article written by Steve Eubanks, an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author, that I thought would be interesting to take a look at. I've excerpted some of what I believe would be of most importance to us.

New regulations and greater government scrutiny are reshaping the business landscape-and the way owners run their courses.

For eight years, the minefields in the golf industry have been oversupply, underemployment, anemic consumer confidence and a race to the bottom in online pricing. Some consider most of those days to be behind us. Like groundhogs in February, golfers have slowly and carefully crawled out of their holes, testing the temperature of the game.

That doesn't mean it's smooth sailing for 2016, however. The mines buried just below the surface are different now, but just as deadly. In some cases—government regulation, for example—they're infinitely worse for business.

During an economic downturn or an oversaturated market, course owners at least have a fighting chance, an opportunity to reinvent their facilities and separate themselves from the competition. But when it comes to edicts out of Washington—especially the tens of thousands of regulations passed down from the alphabet soup of government agencies since the Great Recession—owners can do little more than brace themselves for the blast.

Here are some government regulations that will, for good or ill, change the way most owners, operators and superintendents do business in 2016:

Minimum Wage, Overtime and New Salary Guidelines

The fallout from the \$15 minimum wage laws implemented in some states and municipalities has not been fully realized, but the short-term trends are clear: high mandated wages may mean fewer employees. At golf courses in areas where the minimum wage is higher than average, there may be fewer golf car and bag room attendants, smaller maintenance staffs and less servers in food and beverage. And the employees tend to be older. As wages go up, younger, inexperienced workers are squeezed out in lieu of a more mature and experienced employee who's quite happy making \$15 an hour.

The biggest hit on the wage front in 2016, however, will be the change to the definition of a salaried employee. Currently, the 'white collar' exemption for the administrative or executive people in the business office or the supervisors of two or more full-time positions is \$455 a week, which equates to a yearly salary of \$23,000 and change. Under the new rules, it won't be a fixed number but an index, so every year it's likely to be adjusted.

continued on page 5

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What's that number going to be? It's still up in the air, but based on what was published by the Department of Labor in 2015, the figure will probably exceed \$50,000 annually by the summer. So you're seeing more than a doubling [in the salary minimum], and every year after that you'll see this minimum salary cap indexed, so you'll likely see even more increases.

If you want to disburse the hours among more people, you run the risk of bumping up against Affordable Care Act regulations, among others.

The Affordable Care Act

In 2016, all businesses with 50 to 99 full-time equivalent employees will be required to offer healthcare coverage to 95 percent of their workforce. "If you have two people working 20 hours a week, they'll count as one full-time employee for purposes of the ACA," explains Chris Ward, employment law specialist at the international law firm of Foley & Lardner. "If you have three people who are working 10 hours, they'll combine those as well. So, if you're trying to monkey around with the math, that may get you in a bind."

And the government will likely find out. According to Steve Jackson, senior vice president of PrimePay, a payroll services company that specializes in small businesses, employers around the country are seeing more audits because they aren't disclosing appropriately or maintaining documentation. "We've seen a 300 percent increase year-over-year in the number of Department of Labor audits," says Jackson, "and we fully expect to see an increase in audits into 2016."

Of course, politics will play a huge role in how the ACA is implemented in the future. "The Affordable Care Act was writ-

ten by lawyers and has enormous complexity and lacks transparency," says Eric Groves, CEO of Alignable, a technology company that helps connect small businesses with customers. "It's difficult to understand, so small business owners are worried about compliance."

They should be. Not only will course owners have to keep track of the hours of all of their employees on a weekly basis, they'll have to report those figures regularly to the government, all the while keeping Uncle Sam informed about the healthcare options in their area. At the very least, it will be an administrative challenge for all.

Waters of the United States Regulation

The most sweeping and controversial regulation of 2015 is still up in the air in 2016. In December, the General Accounting Office charged the EPA with violating federal law in promoting the "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) regulation, an attempt by the EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to apply the Clean Water Protection Act to small ponds and streams, including the types of holding ponds and wetlands that can be found on most any golf course.

According to Kathleen Hartnett White, director of the Armstrong Center for Energy & the Environment, the EPA's re-definition of WOTUS is about land use control rather than water. "Ignoring multiple Supreme Court rulings instructing the EPA to back off private land," she notes, "the EPA decided to offer yet another definition of waters that would vastly extend federal jurisdiction over land across the country."

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals put a temporary stay on the regulation, but the outcome is far from certain, and it could affect golf course owners and operators and superintendents in a profound and deleterious way. ❖

By Don Hearn

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MTE Turf Equipment Solutions Honored by Jacobsen

(Charlotte, N.C. February 19, 2016) – Jacobsen®, a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) company, recognized its top-performing dealers and salespeople during the Golf Industry Show in San Diego earlier this month.

Rochester, NY based MTE Turf Equipment Solutions received two major awards at the event.

Mark Casey of MTE was recognized as one of the top three salespeople in the nation. MTE also walked away with Jacobsen's Global Dealer of the Year award, which is based on a dealer's sales growth, market penetration and market share.

"The dealer awards ceremony is always a special event for us and our dealer network," said Troy Murray, Director of Sales for Jacobsen. "It was great to see MTE win two of our top awards. We recognized them for truly going above and beyond for our customers."

About Jacobsen

With over 90 years of experience in the turf maintenance industry, Jacobsen, a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) Company, has built a legacy of precision craftsmanship, legendary quality of cut and unmatched expertise. Dedicated solely to delivering perfectly groomed turf, Jacobsen equipment is used on some of the finest formal turf areas across the United States and the world, through an extensive distribution network and the international Ransomes brand. Additional information about Jacobsen can be found at jacobsen.com.

About Textron Inc.

Textron Inc. is a multi-industry company that leverages its global network of aircraft, defense, industrial and finance businesses to provide customers with innovative solutions and services. Textron is known around the world for its powerful brands such as Bell Helicopter, Cessna, Beechcraft, Hawker, Jacobsen, Kautex, Lycoming, E-Z-GO, Greenlee, Textron Systems, and TRU Simulation + Training. For more information visit: textron.com.

For further information please contact:

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MTE Turf Equipment Solutions, a Northeast-based Jacobsen dealer, took home the brand new Global Dealer of the Year Award. Pictured above (left to right) are David Withers, President of Jacobsen, Tom Houseknecht, President of MTE, Craig Houseknecht, VP Operations for MTE, and Chris Makowski, Territory Sales Manager for Jacobsen.



Pictured above are David Withers (left), President of Jacobsen and Mark Casey (right), Sales Representative for MTE Turf Equipment Solutions. Casey was recognized as being one of the nation's top salespeople.



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Kevin Doyle - GCSAA Updates



I feel very fortunate to be able to work and meet great people in my position as your field staff representative. Whether with superintendents or with allied groups, I try and maintain my focus on the mission of your association: Serving its members, advancing their profession and enhancing the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf.

As I headed from a Finger Lakes AGCS meeting to Ithaca, New York, for the New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) meeting, I was looking forward to seeing the friendly folks I have come to know and meeting a new person or two, as well.

This past year, I did indeed meet a couple of new people, one of which I hope you get to know, as well. Jim Diermeier, certified grounds manager and New York State certified nursery professional, is currently the horticulturalist at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, New York.



Jim's energy and input sparked some conversations between us, at which point, I learned much more. As a past-president and education committee chair for NYSTA, Jim puts a priority on education. His sparkling resume continues to stress that emphasis, noting his history as an instructor for the Professional School of Horticulture and Continuing Education Department at the New York Botanical Garden. Why stress the education aspect of Jim's background? This newsletter is used by the chapter to communicate and educate you the members. In doing so, the chapter hopes you get added value for your membership.

I asked Jim, with the blessing of your newsletter editor, if he would be willing to add content to your newsletter, an offer he happily accepted. "Kevin, I will suggest straightforward landscape solutions and ideas that can be easily implemented." Jim hopes to contribute some tips and tricks, plant suggestions and other content that might be useful to you and your facility. Above all, he told me this will be fun.

I receive another chapter publication that has a very talented horticulturalist contributor, and quite frankly, it's the first part of the newsletter I read! I'm looking forward to reading Jim's articles, I hope you are too.

GCSAA Resources and Deadlines
you Get Cool Stuff from your Association Already:

Teach for GCSAA

Are you a leading expert with the applicable, cutting-edge research superintendents crave? Are you a superintendent, assistant or equipment manager who had a lightbulb moment that improved results or savings at your course? Find out how you can teach in GCSAA's industry-leading education program at the Golf Industry Show. The submission process to teach for GCSAA at the 2017 conference in Orlando, Fla., Feb. 6-9, is open until **March 22**. Proposals for 2017 will be reviewed by the Conference Education Task Group and notification of selections will occur in June.

Content with practical takeaways from educators, superintendents, assistant superintendents, equipment managers and other industry leaders is desired. GCSAA accepts proposals of many shapes and sizes to ensure the annual education conference is packed with engaging education. Formats include seminars, sessions, workshops and panels ranging from 20 minutes to 8 hours. To submit your idea follow this [link](#).

Collegiate grants available to members' children

Applications will be accepted through **March 15** for the Joseph S. Garske Collegiate Grant Program, which assists GCSAA members' children in funding their education at either an accredited college or trade school. It is available to the children of GCSAA members who have been active for five or more consecutive years. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Garske grant sponsored by Par Aide.

Knowing the costs of higher education will continue to rise, the Environmental Institute for Golf developed this program to provide scholarship assistance to the children and grandchildren of GCSAA members who have been active Class A, Superintendent Members, Class C, Class A-Retired, or Class AA members for five or more consecutive years. Deadline **April 15th**. Information regarding the Legacy award sponsored by Syngenta click [here](#).

continued on page 10

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Friend of the Association Profile - ezLocator

Since 2008, ezLocator has been providing a hole location and green management solution. Since then we have added many of the finest clubs in the U.S. and Canada including clubs like Old Sandwich Club, Plymouth, MA. We pride ourselves on listening to our customer and allowing them to guide us with new product ideas.

Based upon customer and prospect feedback, ezLocator developed and released ezPins, a hole location and pin sheet generation product. Based on the industry leading ezLocator software platform, ezPins is offered as a new solution where on-site slope analysis is not desired and value pricing is of importance. With ezPins, golf course superintendents minimize pin placement mistakes and offer more choices to members and players. Golf pros can easily customize the pin sheets with 8 different layouts and there is ample opportunity for corporate outing logos and even generating revenue through advertisements.

ezLocator developed a process where we empower superintendents in the setup process, resulting in reduced initial costs. Through the newly developed setup process for ezPins, we are able to setup a new customer without a course visit. Additionally, should a customer desire to upgrade to ezLocator, it can be done very easy and preserve the initial investment of ezPins.

How can ezPins Help Your Course?

It eliminates placement errors and guesswork, while isolating areas for agronomy purposes. You can review historical hole locations and adapt them for wet/dry weather. ezPins includes Tour-quality pin sheets and a Mobile App that can generate consistent advertising revenue. Create 7 days of pins in under 15 minutes that can adapt for tournament play & special pins if desired.

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ezLocator and ezPins is represented by Affiliate Member, Steve Boucini. He can be contacted at 508-561-4079; sboucini@gmail.com.

GCSAA Updates - continued from page 8

GCM's Most Valuable Technician Award

Does your turf equipment technician deserve a day in the sun, a tip-of-the-cap for all the hard work and the vital behind-the-scenes role they play in the success of your golf facility? If so, he or she is eligible for GCM's Most Valuable Technician (MVT) awards program, presented in partnership with Foley United. To learn more and nominate your tech visit the GSAA website [here](#).

GCSAA 2016 Member Engagement Opportunities

Want to volunteer at the GCSAA level? It is not too late yet! GCSAA is encouraging those interested in 2016 committee/task group service to apply. Click [here](#) for more information.

Upcoming FREE webcasts:

- [Mar. 10: Improving Management and Communication for Your Facility's Success](#)
- [Mar. 16: How to Read Your Soils Report](#)

- [Mar. 17: BMPs for the Control of Anthracnose on Annual Bluegrass Putting Greens](#)
- [Apr. 5: Think Preventative when Planning Your Fairy Ring Program](#)
- [Apr. 14: ADA Practical Practices and Growing the Game](#)
- [Apr. 20: Waste Risks Solutions and Opportunities - Equipment Management Series](#)

Again, if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me. ❖

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Visit website for details

Sports Turf Seminar

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with reception
Wednesday, March 2 • 10am-5pm
Live Auction 4pm
Thursday, March 3 • 9am-12 noon

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DIVOT DRIFT... announcements ... educational seminars ... job opportunities ...tournament results...and miscellaneous items of interest to the membership.

ANNOUNCEMENTS


Our condolences are extended to Jack Hassett and family on the passing of his brother in a work related accident.

Best wishes to Roy Sibley on a speedy recovery from a recent injury.

Best wishes to Dr. Pat Vittum of UMass on a speedy recovery. She has been recovering from a concussion and is on light duty at work.

As in the past, *The Newsletter* continues to invite Affiliate members to submit a press release about new personnel, new products or a company bio. We will print each and every release **free of charge**. This is a great way to advertise for free. Who said nothing in this world is free? Free advertising to better your company, wow what an offer.






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www.hfngroup.com

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Mark Casey: (617) 990-2427. Matt Lapinski: (978) 551-0093

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Golf course architects
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Email: info@mcgolfdesign.com
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www.mcgolfdesign.com

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Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England

The Newsletter - Rate Schedule

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Address: _____

Contact Name: _____ Email _____

Issues (List month and total number): _____

Amount of Check: _____ (Made payable to "GCSANE")

<u>Member Rates:</u>	Monthly Rate	4 Times Per Yr. (Save 5%)	6 Times Per Yr. (Save 10%)	8 Times Per Yr. (Save 10%)	Annual Rate (Save 15%)
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<input type="checkbox"/> Full Page (vertical; 7.5" wide x 10" deep)	☐\$200.00	☐\$ 760.00	☐\$1080.00	☐\$1440.00	☐\$2040.00

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<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 page (horizontal; 7.5" wide x 5" deep)	☐\$180.00	☐\$684.00	☐\$972.00	☐\$1296.00	☐\$1836.00
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****DEADLINE for ads: The first of the month for that month's issue.***

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jheston@verizon.net