



WESTERN VIEWS

March - April, 1999

Official Publication of the West Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association

1999 Meeting Schedule Western Michigan GCSA

June 14	Country Club of Jackson
July 20	Boulder Creek Golf Club
September 13	Kent C.C. Golf Day
October 5	Walnut Hills C.C. (Annual Meeting)
November 6	*(Fall Party)

* Location and/or dates to be determined.

President's Message

Spring has sprung, and summer's here! Like many of you, I have been rather busy — finishing those spring projects and getting staff hired to help get the course in shape.

A week or so ago it was Mother's Day, and I hope you all took some time to spend the day with your families and give a bit back to the people who help us out a great deal during the hectic times of the year.

It's hard to believe that the Heritage Glen and St. Ives meetings have already come and gone! For those that were there, it was a great time and I'm sure the Jackson meeting will be a good one. Please plan to

attend with your Club Manager or Owner. I'm sure Bill will have the course in fine shape for us. The Roster Book will be soon to follow. Thank you for your patience!

Have a good summer and enjoy it... and as a line in one of my son's books reads, "Hakuna matata!" — or, in English, "No worries!"

Sincerely,
Al Bathum
President

Welcome New Members

Please welcome these new members to our organization!

Tad Bystry

Chief Mechanic,
Clearbrook Golf Management

Dave Mahaney

Owner/Operator,
Brookshire Golf Club

Tony Souders

Golf Course Superintendent,
Clearbrook Country Club

John Tuckerman

Golf Course Superintendent,
The Ravines

Ben Keeler

Assistant Golf Course
Superintendent,
Country Club of Jackson

Mike Woodke

Director of Grounds,
Clearbrook Golf Management

Spring Meetings Held

The Heritage Glen and St. Ives meetings were held in the past month, and both went off without a hitch. On both occasions, the weather was good and both were well attended.

At the Heritage Glen meeting, we took some time after lunch to recognize the retirement of Cecil Kerr. Novartis helped sponsor the meeting, and a check for \$1,400 will be donated to the MTF in Cecil Kerr's name. Good luck, Cecil!

We appreciate both clubs and their staff for hosting the meetings, and would like to recognize Superintendents Dan Litogot and Alex Greenacre for their help.



SERIALS
Editor's Note: Please write me if you have any corrections or if you are interested in doing an article for us at:

Western Views
Michigan State University
6321 Cowan Lake Drive
Rockford, Michigan 49341

What's the Proper Staffing Ratio for a Golf Course?—

There are no hard and fast rules-of-thumb to establishing staffing ratios. Every facility is different. Before using any staffing ratio, consider factors that affect staffing, such as the goals and mission of the course; operations; staff experience level; equipment age and inventory. Also consider differing policies on overtime that may require additional staff if you don't allocate much overtime at your course. For example, I have three people out of a staff of 18 to 21 who do nothing but landscape because golfers expect the grounds and club to be picturesque all the time. Many superintendents don't have that luxury, but our members are willing to pay for it.

We have been successful in preaching the philosophy that a smaller, more experienced staff, paid a fair wage with overtime opportunity, is more cost-effective. Most importantly, such a staff is more quality-effective than a larger, inexperienced staff working a 40-hour week.

The goal for maintenance must also be considered. For example, if Augusta is a '10' and the goal for your course is to be a '9,' you can't staff at a '5' level and expect to achieve this goal.

When considering an addition to staff and reviewing your budget, be sure to look at the incremental increases in operating expenses that follow, such as fuel, equipment and training expenses, as well as traditional payroll, insurance and benefits expenses.

*Robert J. Maibusch, CGCS, MG,
Hinsdale Golf Club, Hinsdale, Ill.*

Ready to Move?

*Don't be unprepared when it's time for that all-important interview*_____

*by James A. Thomason, GCS
Bent Tree Country Club*

Looking to move? Do you know the steps to ensure you can get there? Each month the GGCSA mails flyers posting several superintendent and assistant superintendent job openings. Guess what? You will not be the only person applying.

First item of business is getting yourself organized, which includes the all-important resume. Think about how much money is riding on these two to three sheets of paper. This part is simple: have it professionally done! I have seen this mistake time after time. If you don't want to spend the money for a professional resume, there are several "how-to" books on the market to help you look your best to a prospective employer.

Today it is not uncommon for employers to receive anywhere from 15 to 30 resumes for one management job. Remember, these are professional jobs. Just because we get wet, dirty, sunburned and don't spend a lot of time in the office doesn't mean we aren't considered professionals. So when you go to the interview, look the part.

I was interviewing for an assistant earlier this year and could not believe what some applicants would wear to the interview. In my opinion, a golf

shirt, shorts and a beaded necklace are not proper attire for an interview. As a general rule, you can't go wrong with a coat and tie. Remember: the person interviewing you will probably be your boss and will expect you to represent him or her well if you are selected for employment.

I was lucky starting out. On my first interview for an assistant position, I wore slacks, a button-up shirt and a coat. The interviewer let me know if I made it to the next round I should wear a tie. Competition is so keen in this business your attire at an interview can weigh against you when the final candidate is selected.

Plan to be about five to ten minutes early for your interview. To guarantee you are prompt, review your directions prior to the interview date. If possible, drive to the location a day or so before to make sure you know where you are going. I remember arriving at my last job interview early and sitting in my car going over questions I thought I might be asked.

Be prepared for the statement "Tell me a little about yourself." During your conversation always make eye contact with all persons conducting the interview. Keep answers on a professional level and don't wonder

Continued on page 4

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Round Table Meeting Informative

Paul Richter and his education committee put together an informative meeting for us at this year's Roundtable, and I would like to thank him and those that came and shared information with their fellow turf managers. We would also like to thank Steve Tedhams for hosting the meeting at his club's nice new clubhouse. High points of the meeting are as follows.

Steve Biondo, a Human Resources person, gave suggestions on interviewing and hiring techniques to get the right person for the job. Then he also offered suggestions on how to keep the employees that you've hired.

Key Elements of an Interview — Be prepared and organized with the right atmosphere, interview questions and time to devote to the interview. Probing and listening are important. Ask questions that will be answered with something other than a yes or no. Present information about the job and a closing. Take notes. Conduct a fair and legal interview.

Common Errors Involved in an Interview — Talking too much and not letting the person being interviewed talk; telegraphing desired responses; jumping to conclusions; initial impression bias;

failing to know the job requirements; and not using an organizational approach.

Retention Practices That Work — Hire well. Train well. Communicate well. Involve well with information. Reward well, not just with money: use time off, golf with family members, gift certificates, etc. Build relationships and communicate daily. Protect well, buy as good of equipment as you can afford, and operate ethically and safely. Treat everyone the same, even if they aren't your favorite.

The following is a Top Ten list of what employees want from their employers.

1. Appreciation.
2. Be in on things.
3. Help on personal issues.
4. Job security.
5. Good wages.
6. Interesting work.
7. Promotion.
8. Good management.
9. Good work conditions.
10. Tactful discipline.

If you are interested in more information on the above, a book entitled *Keeping Good People* is suggested.

The next subject covered in the meeting was maintenance building renovations and new construction. Ron Dahlin and Tom Drougel had some good suggestions on renovation that wouldn't cost an arm and a leg. Tom and his crew had constructed some great cupboards to conceal and make the interior of the workshop neater and easier to keep clean. Reel units, chain saws and lubricants were all hidden out of site with still easy accessibility. Ron and his crew came up with a unique lift table that you can drive onto or walk equipment onto, and raise up to any level to check it out. If you saw either shop, you could tell they are a professional operation.

We also saw the new maintenance buildings at Kent Country Club and Kalamazoo Country Club. Both look like they are well done and will be an asset to their respective clubs. If you have any questions about renovation or have a new building in mind, I would suggest you talk with any of these superintendents.

In the afternoon, we broke up into groups and discussed various topics from budgets to greens maintenance programs.

If you haven't attended a Roundtable meeting lately, I would suggest you check it out next spring!

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Ready to Move? ...continued _____

into personal rhetoric. It is always a good idea to mention projects you have worked on and awards you have received throughout your career.

If possible, obtain a letter of recommendation. If you have a portfolio, bring it. Pictures are worth a thousand words, and the club you are applying with may have some problems you've already fixed at a different club.

A little advice for those looking to move up in the future: start laying your groundwork now. You can accomplish this by volunteering your time to different

clubs and associations, writing articles, starting a portfolio and offering input for your club newsletters.

A lot of these things I mentioned are very simple, but it helps to be reminded. So again, have a professional-looking resume, dress appropriately and be on time. Practice questions you think might be asked and get your portfolio in order.

Best of luck!

*From "Through The Green"
— March/April 1999*



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