

# DON'T KID YOURSELF

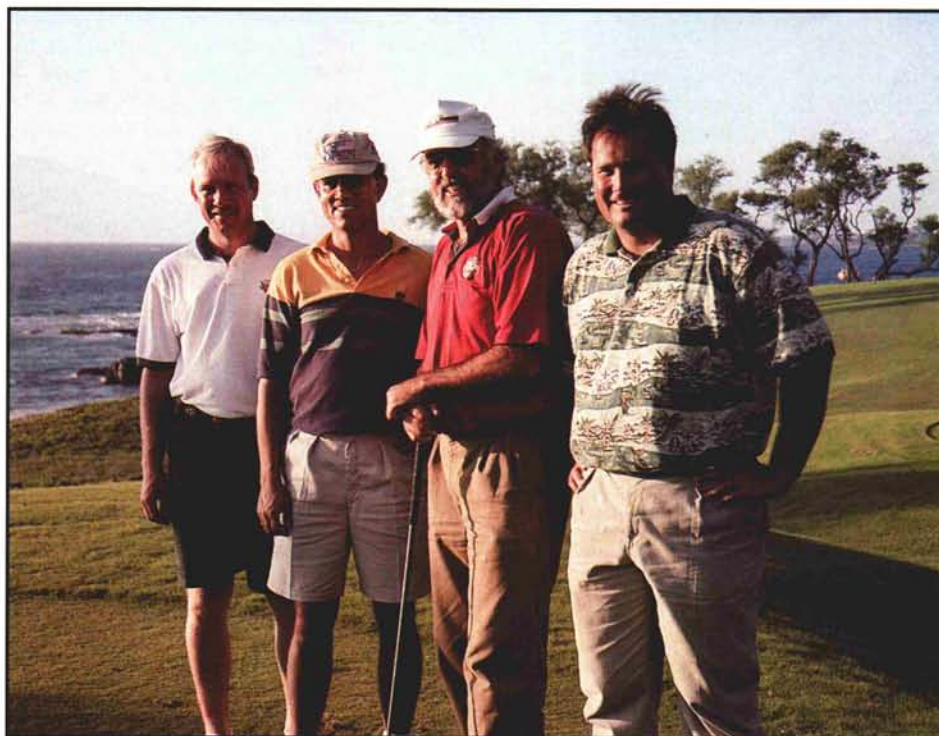
*What's really number one in your life?*

by R. A. (BOB) BRAME

**W**E LIVE in a society that tells us our worth is determined by what we do — how we earn a living. We judge ourselves and others based on career position and performance. Although our jobs and performance are important, they are not the most important measuring stick. I would submit to you that life is about people. Relationships! How we interact with those around us.

Without question, golf is a great game. We all like playing the game, and every golf course superintendent enjoys the challenge of working with Mother Nature to condition the playing field. However, think about the *big picture*, which stands the test of time. How many of the golfers who play your course today will remember its condition five years from now? "Too long a time period," you say. "How could they?" Fine, how about five weeks, or even five days? In reality, golf course superintendents are evaluated each day about current conditions. Yesterday is gone, and it means very little in golf course management. How many of us remember the condition of the course upon which the U.S. Open was played ten years ago? How about five years ago? Maybe a few people remember a couple details about past national championship sites, but for most golfers such factors fade quickly.

Don't get me wrong. We should all take pride in our jobs and what we accomplish day to day. However, recognizing that some golfers can become a little obsessed and even emotional about course conditions, it's easy for the superintendent to get backed into a corner. The view from that corner would suggest that if the greens were a little faster or smoother, or the bunkers firmer, or the fairways greener, or . . . , everyone would be happy. It won't happen. There will always be something else, something more that someone wants. Do your best and go home. It's those nurtured relationships with family, friends, and golfers that endure



*What's more important, the conditioning of the course or the people who play and/or maintain it? Golf is a wonderful game immersed in rich tradition, but neither the game nor the greatest of courses matches the beauty and value of nurtured relationships.*

and make a long-term difference, not golf course conditioning. Make sure your top investment is in what will still matter in five days, weeks, or years.

I can recall thoughtful deeds of others, directed toward me, from as far back as my memory takes me. How about you? Golf course conditioning comes and goes, even for the most experienced superintendents. The 1995 season confirmed this fact and brought to mind a statement most of us have heard. "There are only two types of superintendents — those who have lost grass and those who will." How true! We all want to avoid losing grass and the emotional outcry that goes with it; however, life isn't really about keeping the perfect golf course.

There are 51 references containing the word "grass" in the Bible. These references cite conditions that range

from flourishing to withering. When studied more closely, the Biblical references to grass underscore something we all know, but don't like to think about. Like grass, our days are numbered. In 1 Peter 1:24 we find these words: "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." Truly, life is a precious gift! A gift we can use either for things that endure or wither and fade.

Remember, don't kid yourself. Life is not about the game of golf or course conditioning.

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The opinions expressed in "All Things Considered" are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the USGA Green Section.