

Sending a Message

by Bo Links

The fuel that runs the engine in any long term relationship is communication. And sometimes the best words to communicate are as simple as “thank you.”

At Lake Merced Golf Club in Daly City, California, we recently recognized our hard working maintenance staff with a nice article in our monthly newsletter distributed to the entire membership. The article acknowledged a fact that escapes many members – that our maintenance crew includes many fine employees who have spent a lifetime of service at our club. Our superintendent has been with us for 45 years; our first assistant for 26 years; and the

We always acknowledge the crew at our Annual Meeting, but this article was different. It wasn't a passing mention at a meeting when people had other business to conduct. It is an article published for all to see – a tangible item that each member of the crew can take home to family and share. And that is precisely why, when the club recognized our golf course maintenance staff, we included a photograph with everyone's name.

For the membership, the reaction was immediate. Many learned for the first time the names of employees they had only seen on mowers, raking bunkers, or trimming trees. And for the crew, the result was a justifiable swelling of pride. They know they do a good job. But when others recognize it – and do so publicly – well, you just can't put words together to describe the new bounce in their step.



Lake Merced Golf Club maintenance staff. *Standing l to r:* Don Cozad, Robert Riboroso, John Venturini, Terry Ferkel, Ron Zimmerman, Hector Chavez, Filamer Bacani. *Kneeling l to r:* Francisco Pinto, Pedro Sandoval, Juan Gonzalez, Victorino Puentes, Galdino Roberto, Jorge Orozco-Diaz, Jaime Aquino, Jaime Chavez. *Not pictured:* Khaled Mohammad Abdel-Khader, Ernesto Pediangco.

majority of their crew have been at Lake Merced more than 15 years. That is quite a record, but their achievements are not measured in years, but by the daily dedication they devote to tending our golf course. These are extremely hard working folks, and they face a variety of changing and challenging conditions every day of the week. As I have explained to more than one member when discussing course conditions: our crew has to battle Mother Nature and she never takes a day off! And yet, day in and day out, our golf course is in superior condition.

every now and then to let them know you care and appreciate what they do.

If our example is any indication, saying *thank you* now and then goes a long way.

There is an obvious lesson in all of this. If you want to get the most out of your staff, treat them with dignity. Show some appreciation for people who work long hours under often challenging conditions to deliver a quality playing surface for golfers. Let them know what you think. Maintain high standards. Give them the resources to do the job. But most important of all, give them a “high five”



ROBERT D. “BO” LINKS has volunteered his time as a USGA Green Section Committee member in the Southwest Region since 1991.