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Tooting your horn can be a valuable method of self-promotion to communicate your value and showcase your strengths.

(president's message)

It's time to toot your own horn

When I was 10 years old, I played on my local pee wee football team. "Play" is a loose definition for what I did, because I spent most of my time warming the bench, and by the end of the season, I was quite disenchanted.

My father could sense my frustration, so following another game in which I sat more than I played, he pulled me aside and told me a fable that has stuck with me to this day. My father had confidence in my athletic abilities, but he was not one to interfere with a coach and how he dealt with his players. Therefore, he used that fable to teach me that sometimes in life you have to "toot your own horn."

The fable went like this: Once upon a time, an elephant was floating lazily down a winding river when he spotted a mouse clinging for life under a drawbridge. As the elephant got closer, the mouse dropped into the river from exhaustion. The elephant knew the current was dangerously swift in this section of the river and that the mouse would drown, so he sprang into action to rescue the mouse.

Unable to float under the approaching drawbridge, the elephant belted out a horn sound with his trunk. The drawbridge attendant heard it and raised the bridge just in time for the elephant to slide under and scoop the mouse from the river. With his strength returning, the mouse rode safely down the river on the elephant's belly, the two chatting and becoming friends as they went along.

After many miles, the elephant spotted another drawbridge on the now-calm river. The elephant knew this one was just high enough for him to barely squeak under (no pun intended). Unfortunately, by the time the mouse realized the elephant was not going to use his trunk to signal the drawbridge attendant to raise the bridge, it was too late, and the mouse bumped his head on the bridge and fell into the river.

Rested and capable of swimming to shore, the bewildered mouse instead swam after the elephant. He asked his newfound friend why he didn't blow his trunk to signal the drawbridge attendant. The elephant looked at the mouse and said, "My friend, you will learn there are times in life that you just have to toot your own horn."

Understandably, the thought of tooting your own horn in the real world might have a negative connotation. However, if you think of it in terms of humbly displaying your most-

positive attributes with genuine pride and enthusiasm, tooting your horn can be a valuable method of self-promotion to communicate your value and showcase your strengths.

Turfgrass professionals often fall into the role of the mouse in the fable. It could be they are uncomfortable in the spotlight or have the mindset that their work will speak for itself, but in today's society, we can no longer take for granted that job security will be the logical result of loyalty and hard work. It is vital that our employers and others at our facility become aware of our accomplishments and our value to the business. It's time we toot our own horns or risk bumping our heads.

GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members and advancing the profession, and we are here to advocate on your behalf — to, in effect, toot your horn for you. Efforts such as the recent Thank a Golf Course Superintendent campaign and our participation in National Golf Day are examples of GCSAA advocating the value of a well-trained, educated superintendent. We have also forged strong relationships with the national golf media and our allied golf associations that have resulted in increased recognition and appreciation of the role superintendents play in the golf industry.

In addition, GCSAA has created tools for both Class A (<http://bit.ly/gcsaa-class-a>) and Certified Golf Course Superintendent members (<http://bit.ly/gcsaa-certification-tools>) to assist in promoting their achievements. When used in a humble manner, these and other GCSAA tools can help you toot your horn at your own facility.

As successful as GCSAA has been in the last decade in elevating the profession and promoting its members, there is still more to do. You can help in that effort by being open to tooting your own horn, even if it's not the most comfortable thing to do. GCSAA will continue to enhance our efforts, but regardless of how much we do, we can't reach everyone. This is where your efforts can help enhance ours.

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