

Have we created a monster?

Years ago, very few people entering the green keeping field were professionally trained and educated, yet they did a great job of running golf courses.

Today, the opposite is true. I do not know of a club that does not look for a college graduate in turfgrass management to manage its golf course. And many are insisting on certified superintendents.

This trend is great for the professional image of golf course management. We are all encouraging our assistants to charge ahead and some people even keep track of how many current superintendents they can claim as one-time protégés.

We are giving out scholarships right and left, which I also think is great, although I would like to see them tied more closely to on-the-job training.

The salary levels for superintendents have increased to the point the field is now attracting a new breed of superintendents, a trend which I do not think is great and will be the subject of another President's Message.

In our quest to elevate the professional standards of golf course

management, have we created a monster?

Recently in Palm Beach County, 75 qualified, educated superintendents applied for one job opening. Given our climate, I don't think the situation is going to get better. I know two good superintendents in South Florida who cannot get jobs because of the competition.

If you were to lose your job today, how easy do you think it would be to find another one? Do you like those 75-to-1 odds?

I know the PGA of America is having the same problem, according to a recent article in Golf Course News.

Should we look into a certification program for Florida? Should we try to elevate the status of assistants? Should we talk to our alma maters about raising their entrance standards and lowering the number of slots? My college — Michigan State — recently took that route.

I have asked Joel Jackson, CGCS, a former FGCSA president who now serves as chairman of the long-range planning committee, to look into the supply-and-demand aspects of our job market. If you would like to serve on that committee, contact Joel. In the meantime, I would like you to think about this problem and send me your proposals (or rebuttals).

It's your job that's on the line... your job and your future.



Paul Crawford

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