Y
ears 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.