BY MARK LESLIE

The misconception that private clubs are "clandestine operations" must be clarified to the general public and in legislative chambers, according to the new executive vice president of the Club Managers Association of America.

"For some reason, legislators in particular tend to focus on the private club as negative instead of positive," said James B. Singerling, adding that the challenge for the CMAA is to educate legislators and the public about the "positive" aspects of clubs.

Singerling, who on May 1 succeeded James A. Schuping at CMAA, said: "For club managers, the challenge ahead is to ensure that the proper information on clubs and what they actually are, is disseminated. Mainly, instead of a club being perceived as some clandestine negative private entity, we must highlight the positive parts the clubs play in a community." He said those include:

- Taxes and payroll.
- Most private clubs draw considerable money from outside the community and that money stays in the community.
- Job security is higher in clubs than any other part of the hospitality industry because there are no seasonal layoffs ... since clubs have dues income to supplement them during the off-season.
- The number of local vendors supported by the clubs, from produce, meat and flower companies to linens, plumbers, electricians, and many others.

"All money is brought in by members, not the general public. Yet members also tend to be the people who support other restaurants because they are the ones who tend to dine out more often," Singerling said.

U.S. clubs now 'benchmark' for world, Singerling says

James B. Singerling, the new executive vice president of the Club Managers Association of America, said American clubs are now viewed as "the benchmark" of operation around the world.

Singerling said European clubs are now seeking American expertise.

"We see a tremendous reversal now of trading of clubs and golf courses over the years have thrived on tradition here in the United States, pulling from Scotland. We now see a wonderful trend that golf has taken off in Europe itself — particularly Spain and France — and they were crying for me (while working with Robert Trent Jones Sr.) golf course design, construction and management companies.

He was responsible for administering and coordinating all international operations and reorganizing Jones' European offices.

The major danger ahead, Singerling said, is that "many legislators have accepted the perception of cloak and dagger stuff" regarding private clubs. This misconception has led to the private club being perceived as "clandestine operations" in Europe.

Singerling's knowledge of the industry is first-hand. Before joining CMAA, he was vice president and general manager of Coral Ridge Country Club in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a corporate official in the Robert Trent Jones Sr. golf course design, construction and management companies.

Singerling said European clubs are now viewed as "the benchmark" of operation around the world.

CMAA President Kenneth Brown, left, welcomes aboard James Singerling.

Singerling's knowledge of the industry is first-hand. Before joining CMAA, he was vice president and general manager of Coral Ridge Country Club in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a corporate official in the Robert Trent Jones Sr. golf course design, construction and management companies.

He was responsible for administering and coordinating all international operations and reorganizing Jones' European offices.

The major danger ahead, Singerling said, is that "many legislators have accepted the perception of cloak and dagger stuff" regarding private clubs. This misconception has led to the private club being perceived as "clandestine operations" in Europe.

Singerling's knowledge of the industry is first-hand. Before joining CMAA, he was vice president and general manager of Coral Ridge Country Club in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a corporate official in the Robert Trent Jones Sr. golf course design, construction and management companies.

He was responsible for administering and coordinating all international operations and reorganizing Jones' European offices.

The major danger ahead, Singerling said, is that "many legislators have accepted the perception of cloak and dagger stuff" regarding private clubs. This misconception has led to the private club being perceived as "clandestine operations" in Europe.

Singerling's knowledge of the industry is first-hand. Before joining CMAA, he was vice president and general manager of Coral Ridge Country Club in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a corporate official in the Robert Trent Jones Sr. golf course design, construction and management companies.

He was responsible for administering and coordinating all international operations and reorganizing Jones' European offices.

The major danger ahead, Singerling said, is that "many legislators have accepted the perception of cloak and dagger stuff" regarding private clubs. This misconception has led to the private club being perceived as "clandestine operations" in Europe.