Double membership? Beware the hype

Ever accuse the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) of conflicting interest? The latest example? An article appearing in the GCSAA’s newsletter, Newsline, which attempts to answer the question posed by its headline: "Why a dual-membership requirement?"

The author, incoming association President Bruce Williams, says there are three groups of potential GCSAA members. The first group? "Those who do not want to join, no matter what the cost," Williams writes. "These individuals have no interest in advancing their profession, and they are also true threats to our profession. Neither GCSAA nor the chapters should let these individuals direct our actions or efforts.

Threats to our profession;

Geez, Bruce, that’s a touch heavy-handed; especially when GCSAA has never offered its membership any opposing views — any way to balance its chorus of pros — on the subject of a dual-membership requirement. Despite what you may have read about the September 1995 Chapter Delegates Meeting in Lawrence, there are members in good standing who oppose aspects of the membership bylaw change (see this month’s guest commentary on opposite page).

Don’t be wrong: A dual-membership requirement — whereby superintendents would be required to join both their local chapters and GCSAA national, or neither — would definitely strengthen the superintendents’ position in the golf universe, Williams says. Some superintendents have more great strides over the past 20 years and for that we can primarily thank GCSAA, which has done a creditable job promoting the profession as just that, a profession.

But take his statement: "The current debate? (If we can call it that) over dual membership has nothing to do with cooperation and everything to do with power, a point about which the association makes no bones. You can’t create a stronger GCSAA without diluting the power of affiliated chapters.

Individual superintendents need more easily addressed on the local level. The proposed bylaw change would make it harder for smaller chapters to operate, which makes them anxious. For example, the new bylaw would impose a more stricture formula on local chapters — not just regarding membership, but regarding who can serve as local chapter officers and board members.

These are not stumbling-block issues. They can be resolved. But it’s just that GCSAA has not given a public forum to the different terms. It’s more troubling the association has seen fit to label dissenters and those not interested in joining GCSAA as "threats to our profession."

In case you missed it;

Architect Roger Rulewich has left Robert Trent Jones Sr. to form his own design firm, The Golf Group (TGG), based in Bernstein, Mass. [Because we received word just before the January issue went to press, the staff decided not to cover this].

Letters

USGA: A GOVT’ AGENCY?

To the editor: When I’m at a new golf course, I always see the course’s rating up on the wall, as given by the United States Golf Association. However, when looking through the rule manuals, I can never find the address for USGA.

My friends and business associates have a misconception about the governmental body, and do not like my differing with them. They say their course is rated in the top 25 by the USGA, and it probably is. But USGA (of USGA) is that small yardstick by which the association itself has invented and not some act of Congress? They get visibly perturbed and think I’m some kind of anti-government protestor.

I’m just trying to make a point.

To confuse me further, though, my friend who works for the federal government wonders why, if the USGA is not a government agency, can it represent itself with the exact same seal and logo as the Great Seal of the United States? Good questions, I think if you polled all of the active golfers in the United States, the vast majority would think the USGA is a government a 1995 bylaw amendment. Can their tax dollars go. I am certain the rest of the golfing world outside America feels this way, as well.

Why am I so adamant about making the distinction that the USGA is not a governmental body? Because if my friends, business associates and the rest of the golfing world think it is no wonder golf gets such a bad rap as a sport for the rich and famous. They feel that if the government is in control of the game of golf, that everything the USGA says is absolute gospel, and this is just not always the case.

If more of us would just concentrate on improving our golf game rather than wondering if this course or that course is "rated," there would be more time for all of us to play golf, as the game would move along faster. Besides, I only rate courses that I can afford to play there.

Mike Pierce, president Daily Greens and Blenders Grand Forks, N.D.

EXPO ’95 FEEDBACK

To the editor:

Just to let the folks at Golf Course News know, I enjoyed your Golf Course Expo ’95 in many ways. First of all, I find that most of my business comes from trade show participation. Expo ’95 did not let me down. I was able to piggy back a show along with the new and positively acquired new clients there.

Second, it was a pleasure to see the Dye family under one roof and have the opportunity to hear each other speak the next day.

Ken May, president Rolling Greens Photography Aurora, Colo.

Super-struggle to keep pace with technology, information

And so the Lorck took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden "to work it and take care of it.

My way — from merely "taking care of it" to studying the effects of temperature on turf, leaf wetness duration and inoculum concentration on infection of annual bluegrass by Colletotrichum graminicola.

I’m confused. When I’m at a USGA, and it probably is. But I was thinking, I mean I was trying to make a point.

To confuse me further, though, my friend who works for the federal government wonders why, if the USGA is not a government agency, can it represent itself with the exact same seal and logo as the Great Seal of the United States? Good questions, I think if you polled all of the active golfers in the United States, the vast majority would think the USGA is a government agency. I think if you polled all of the active golfers in the United States, the vast majority would think the USGA is a government agency.

Unfortunately, there are those retiring superintendents who find themselves to be unmarketable in today’s high-tech golf world," said Richie Valentine, a golf consultant and assistant professor of golf course architecture at the University of Illinois.

Meanwhile, in the midst of the explosion of knowledge and technology, some of the old-time superintendents are being left behind. Many superintendents retire from their full-time positions but continue to keep a hand in the business by working on grounds crews or as mechanics.

"We are those retiring superintendents who have found themselves to be unmarketable in today’s high-tech golf world," said Richie Valentine, a golf consultant and assistant professor of golf course architecture at the University of Illinois.

Exhibit A: A Gofer’s Appeal

Just to let the folks at Golf Course Expo know, I enjoyed