Superintendents should strive to raise visibility of profession

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has been the topic of many animated discussions over the last several months, and for good reason. Any time an association as large as the GCSSA proposes a substantial dues increase there is bound to be chatter amongst its members. But when you add a possible relocation, PDI implementation and a public relations flap over excessive (or necessary) board of director travel, conversations among GCSSA members get downright heated.

We've tackled the above issues in the pages of Golf Course News this month. In the Point/Counterpoint below, the merits of changing the GCSSA's articles of incorporation in order to ease relocation are debated. Our page one Q&A with GCSSA CEO Stephen F. Mona, however, puts this debate and other issues in proper perspective.

The GCSSA has a long list of initiatives, but what exactly is it trying to accomplish?

According to Mona, it all boils down to "providing the best possible future for our members." And a key part of that is raising the level of recognition, visibility and credibility of the golf course superintendent. By doing so, Mona hopes that superintendents will have more job security, more lucrative opportunities and increased career opportunities.

These are worthy, and needed, goals.

I went to Boone, N.C., this fall to talk to the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents about these goals, and what superintendents could do to achieve them.

At the cocktail reception the night before my talk, the barkeep, who assured me he played golf, asked me in a hushed voice, "What exactly do these supervisors do anyway?"

His question may be ignorant, but it makes sense. Superintendents are supposed to do their jobs as quietly as possible. They have to get on the course, get the work done, and get the golfers on the course, but rather it is an issue of empowerment. Unrestricted empowerment - without a system of checks and balances - limits the latitude this amendment will bring, the board will be unable to advance the association in the eyes of key constituents - most importantly the members.

Father-in-law doesn't even know what I do for a living. According to this year's family Christmas letter, I am the editor of "International Golf Club News" and get to "play at prestigious golf clubs around the world." I wish.

A sound relocation process will lead to a sound decision

By TIMOTHY T. O'NEILL, CGCS

It is their profession, the environment, their facility or their national membership association, golf course superintendents on the whole are passionate individuals. Therefore, I was not surprised when it was announced that GCSSA was considering a change in the location of its headquarters. Rather than being disappointed by the comments on the subject, I was encouraged that the sentiments verified members are passionate about their association and what it represents.

I was appointed by GCSSA president Michael Wallace, CGCS, to coordinate the communication of the process that will ultimately answer the relocation question. Having this responsibility has afforded me the opportunity to hear from a variety of constituents with a variety of comments, questions and concerns on the issue.

Rather than focus on whether GCSSA should be located in Lawrence, Kan., Orlando, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Houston or any other city, I would like to direct my comments to the process we are undertaking. The opinion of the GCSSA board of directors is a sound study will determine the best location for the association's headquarters. This process will analyze the financial implications, the ability to service the membership and the opportunity to advance the association in the eyes of key constituents - most importantly the members.

Why was Lawrence selected in the first place? At the time, Lawrence was a logical location - the association was offered a father-in-law doesn't even know what I do for a living. According to this year's family Christmas letter, I am the editor of "International Golf Club News" and get to "play at prestigious golf clubs around the world." I wish.