

Feedback

In defense of GCSAA

In response to James Graham's letter, "GCSAA none of the way," (January GB) I, too feel GCSAA has lost sight of the priorities established by Col. John Morley and others in 1926. Our executive committee has sacrificed the education of the membership for a fairly unsuccessful public relations campaign which has done little to enhance the stature of the superintendent.

Furthermore, I agree with Mr. Graham's contention a more "stringent Code of Ethics" and an Ethics Review Board "with teeth" is needed.

However, I find it hard to accept Mr. Graham's assertions that a "certification examination" and a "bachelors degree, or equivalency, in an applicable major" be required prior to admission to our association. His proposals should not be a prerequisite for, but a benefit of membership. It is the responsibility of GCSAA to provide its members every opportunity to gain the expertise Mr. Graham expects, if the individual so chooses.

It would be self-defeating to limit membership in GCSAA by imposing Mr. Graham's standards "across the board." I have been privileged to know many of the old "greens-keepers" who consistently produce quality playing conditions and maintain a high degree of efficiency in their operations. At the same time I have known some educated, certified, "bona fide" incompetents whose performance leaves much to be desired. CGCS does not, under any circumstances, insure success.

As for the elimination of "commercial members," I do not understand what would be accomplished by refusing membership to these people. If abuses have occurred in the past, superintendents must share the blame. Many "commercial members" are former superintendents with valuable knowledge and experience. I know many who have shared their expertise with me, but I feel I am under no obligation to buy their products. "Commercial members" reminds one of the old line about "living next door to one but not letting my daughter marry one."

Finally, I am young and possibly naive. If superintendents are relinquishing their "high-paying, rewarding positions to amateurs promoted to their highest level of incompetence" then I must question the knowledge and expertise of the "qualified" person in the first place. Something is amiss if Mr. Graham's "competent" associates are being replaced by "felons." Possibly the problem is not just a club trying to hold salaries down.

No one will drag my "reputation and salary into the mire" as long as I carry out my responsibilities.

William R. Roberts
Superintendent
Stevens Point (Wis.) CC

• We also would like to respond to Mr. Graham's letter. The GCSAA is a national professional organization dedicated to better turf for better golf. The more members we can enroll means the greater the number of people involved in maintaining excellent turf. Every organization has its flaws and it's up to its members to improve and make the organization work for them.

The men we have elected as our leaders are highly qualified. They have worked hard to get us this far. Education is the most important task of the GCSAA. Someday perhaps a Bachelors Degree or the equivalent will be required for entrance into the association. But there are already a large number of members who have reached the equivalent of, or surpassed, a bachelors degree through various courses, seminars, etc. and working experience over the years as a superintendent. This experience is what our association was founded on, by men who learned as they worked and wanted to share their knowledge with others. A professional wants to work with others to improve his own profession.

Board of Directors Heart of America GCSA

• I've read various articles by individuals who because of their disagreements with certain policies of the GCSAA, PGA, or CMAA have dropped their membership from these organizations. This certainly doesn't seem to be the solution to the problem. Quitting solves nothing. Working harder in that organization and becoming more involved does seem to present a more sensible solution. The GCSAA has many committees which allow its members to become actively involved in its policy-making decisions. All an individual has to do is volunteer to serve on these committees. Also, a member always has the option to run for the board of directors of that organization. So, there are quite a few choices a member has to voice his opinion in a national association.

Sitting back and complaining or quitting are the easy ways out. An organization is only as strong as its members; the more they participate, the better the organization.

Dave Fearls, CGCS
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A subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
9800 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44102
(phone 216/651-5500)
Publishers of **Golf Business**, **Pest Control**,
and **Weeds Trees and Turf**