

Viewpoint



GOLF BUSINESS is changing. Two new monthly columns were added in the September issue: **Notes from** and **Conference previews**. **Notes from** will be reports on regional conditions (not necessarily weather) from Superintendents. My phone number is 216/651-5500 extension 563. Call me collect. **Conference previews** will tell you what a conference holds in store for superintendents, specifically. This issue has a new monthly column written by Mike Hurdzan called **Designer's forum**. Mike will air his opinion on many issues of concern to superintendents. I hope that if you disagree, you will take time to write your opinion so that the column will, indeed, become a forum. We have more in store, so as they say on TV, don't go 'way. Read on as two superintendents have taken time to write their viewpoints.

Ron Morris

Superintendent's image: Where is it?

For several years, the concern of many golf course superintendents has been how to go about improving their professional image in the golfing world. The fact that they did not receive the level of recognition that they believed was their justified entitlement either caused them to leave this profession or "live" with the situation. Those living with it were sometimes engulfed in states of either disgust, frustration, bitterness or envy. Others have just accepted their "calling" with whatever level of esteem or image was theirs at a particular location of employment.

Let's discuss this aspect of the golf industry which was briefly mentioned in the Roundtable discussion (**GOLF BUSINESS**, MARCH 1979) of which I was privileged to participate. There is no doubt that within the golf industry there is a hierarchy. Within this hierarchy, especially in the United States, the golf course superintendent languishes. This is as a profession, not necessarily as an individual. Two distinctly different aspects, although the latter can have a definite effect upon the profession, from a positive or negative standpoint. In the early days of golf in Britain and America, the Greenkeeper profession was at the top in the hierarchy, if there

was a hierarchy at that time. Nevertheless, the Greenkeeper was held in high esteem. Many were superb players, some of the best of their time.

Americanization of the game and media glamourizing the golf professional shoved the Greenkeeper into the shadows. A few feeble efforts have been made in an attempt to try and upgrade or improve upon the image. Changing the name certainly did nothing for the image except make a few individuals "feel better". The word "superintendent" lends itself to the "blue-collar" and we're all aware that a skillful manager is not a blue-collar worker, not that many foremen are not good managers, but they are still foremen. I am not sure that anything can ever be accomplished which will place or move the golf course superintendent profession into the same level of esteem as the golf professional. I am not implying that organizational or individual efforts should cease, but I am pessimistic about the profession ever attaining the level of esteem which it definitely merits and desires. As individuals, it is an entirely different matter.

Without question there are many golf course superintendents which hold higher esteem within their organization or club than the golf professional and the club or even general manager. This is achieved strictly by the image which that individual possesses of himself. If you really don't like yourself, the employment situation, or the profession, don't expect to receive the respect which you know one of your fellow superintendents possess. Your appearance and attitude play a major role in the respect and image that your employer has of you. There is probably a considerable number of superintendents who dress like a farmer, ditchdigger or blue collar foreman, in their "club furnished" uniforms, who maintain golf courses at the highest level of turf management. They can be known throughout the area as "Super Sup" but never be accorded the level of esteem that they want so badly. Others in this same situation could care less if they ever attain more than their present status. Then there are those whose appearance is right out of the "pro shop" and that's the only thing about them that's manicured, because their golf course certainly isn't and clothes do not make the man. The other category is the superintendent who looks like a bum and so does his golf course. These last two flit from job to job and can never figure out why.

The superintendent who has it all together is the one that dresses like the professional manager that he is and produces a smooth running operation and a fine golf course. Why did I mention the word "operation"? Recently, I received personal first hand knowledge of a superintendent who drew an above average salary, presented himself well and had an acceptable golf course and then moved on. The club was faced with a sad operation where everything had been held together with baling wire. To justify the salary, the club was saved money, but is now faced with a heavy financial burden due to an inadequate budget.

The "total" golf course superintendent who expects ongoing prestige, esteem and "the image" must, first-of-all, possess personal integrity. Gossiping and being

seemingly glad of another superintendent's misfortune just sets you and the profession back a little farther. Those with personal integrity which equates to job integrity take a major step toward the objective of all superintendents who love the game of golf and turf management. This is where IMAGE is!

Authors Note: Regretfully, I have not renewed my membership in GCSAA. My job does not solely direct itself towards the Superintendent profession. As the Supervisor of Golf for a large Metropolitan area, my personal objectives had to be reoriented. My prime objective is promotion of the game of golf for golfer development. Without the golfer where would the golf industry be? I will remain an ardent and positive supporter of all occupations within the golf industry, speaking out on the issues when deemed necessary. The above article has been on my mind for a long time even though it has been six years since I have been an active golf course superintendent.

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Wilt is wilt . . .

It is a relief to have a reputable plant pathologist like Dr. Houston Couch prove once more with valuable evidence, that we superintendents have always been right . . . wilt is wilt on *Poa annua* when high temperature stress occurs and anthracnose is mostly peculiar to oak trees, sorghum, wheat, oats, barley and rye. This appeared in a recent quote . . . "to date no research has been reported in which inoculation experiments were carried out to test whether or not this particular fungus (*Colletotrichum graminicola*) can actually infect annual bluegrass." Those of us who might have been influenced by recent articles by plant pathologists who haven't done their homework, should now write a letter of thanks to our good friend Dr. Couch for his objective look into the subject of anthracnose as well as other turf problems. His recent two superb articles, "Heat Stress, Not Anthracnose Is Scourge of *Poa Annua*", WEEDS TREES & TURF, June, 1979, and THE CANADIAN GREENMASTER, and the one about nematodes not being the primary cause of fusarium blight which appeared in **GOLF BUSINESS** (July, 1979), should be read by every conscientious superintendent in the country.

In this inflationary period of sky high chemical prices, superintendents should only rely on reputable research data gathered by reputable plant pathologists who have done years of research on our turf problems and not by neophytes who spend their time writing misleading articles based on hazy research. For the ill-informed, this can be wasteful and costly misinformation.

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