PDI’s Potential Pitfalls

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marketed by the GCSAA. These are not our words; these are in the words put forth in the PDI presentation and used by many PDI supporters in discussions on the GCSAA “Talking it Over” Web forum. (Note: The forum has been a great communication tool. We urge everyone who has access to a computer to visit this site.)

In short, it’s clear that GCSAA intends to put even more of its resources and efforts behind these “branded” superintendents in the future. Is this the role we want our association to play?

Continuing education

If passed, everyone who wants to maintain Class A status will have to accumulate a certain amount of continuing education credits/professional development units and meet other educational criteria. This will cost both money and time. No one seems to know how much, but it’s hard to conceive it will be cheap. In addition, those not grandfathered in will have to prove certain competencies that must be validated by a third party. Should we agree to something without knowing what it will cost us?

What’s driving it?

The PDI was initially put forth under the premise that “this is what our employers want.” Later, the message radically shifted to “this is what we, the members, wanted.” Curiously, the great majority of members don’t even seem to know this issue exists. How could it be what “we” wanted? Ask yourself who’s really driving this and why.

Get involved

Again, we invite you to please get actively involved with where the GCSAA is headed. The GCSAA isn’t just an elite group of leaders or a building in Lawrence, Kan. The GCSAA is you, me and the rest of the membership. The debate surrounding this initiative will, in some way, directly affect your future as a superintendent. This is not about “politics,” it’s about your livelihood.

We assure you that those of us who question this initiative are proud to be GCSAA members. Because we have chosen to voice our concerns, we have been called whiners, complainers and extremists. We have been told we may even be jeopardizing (“splat!”) our future in golf course management. But like those who support PDI, we are concerned about the future of our association and profession. We represent every region in the country, range from students to veteran certified superintendents, work at properties from nine holes to multicourse facilities, and hold positions from assistant greenkeeper to general manager.

Many of us have college degrees and some do not. We are not a vocal minority. We are simply people who care passionately about the future of our profession. But don’t just take our word for it. Get informed and get involved.

David Brandon is a Class A superintendent in Michigan who can be reached at 2buddha@mach7.com or 517-466-2653. He wrote this column cooperatively with Don Mahaffey, superintendent of Torres Blancas GC; Max Bowden, CGCS of Cleveland CC; David Pulley, superintendent at Pine Valley CC; Sam Hocutt III, CGCS at Pawleys Plantation; Corey Eastwood, CGCS of Stockton Golf & CC; Rick Niemier, Class A superintendent and GCSAA member; Al Jansen, superintendent at Baraboo CC; and Andrew Gruse, superintendent at Monroe CC.

Positive About PDI

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strong in technical training.
• Most seminar presentations didn’t use the best methods or materials.
• We think of seminars as the primary way to improve skills.

Recommendations

This information led the MSRG to make the following recommendations that are the centerpieces of PDI:
• GCSAA should refine its education program to provide superintendents with the non-technical competencies employers demand.
• The association should provide a tool for members to identify those proficiencies that, if mastered, would bring additional value to their employers. This would improve tenure and compensation.
• GCSAA should teach superintendents to use the competencies in managing their relationships with their employers.
• Employers must be educated about the skills and abilities we possess.
• We should use our skills to influence employers to make hiring decisions based on their golf courses and their demands.
• GCSAA should adopt new membership standards based on what we do, instead of our title and years in service.

We did not make these recommendations without great thought. We spent considerable time working on the membership classifications. We found this to be a difficult subject on which to find agreement, but did compromise on the recommendations that you will find in the graphics in this section.

The MSRG established a one-year period to communicate the proposal to the membership through chapter presenta-
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tions, information on the Web site, and a town hall meeting at the upcoming conference to get feedback from as many members as possible.

The group will meet again in April to assess what you, the members, told us and make adjustments to the proposal. The proposal, along with any revisions, will go to the Board of Directors for approval before the delegates meeting in September. A member vote on any changes to the bylaws required by the final proposal won’t take place until the 2001 conference.

Concerns

Some of the concerns expressed relating to the new standards for Class A are the requirement of a degree, required continuing education and the mandatory use of the HR Web. Some would prefer that we simply leave the membership standards alone and focus only on revamping the educational program.

Golfdom publisher/editor Pat Jones asked me to write this article as part of a pro vs. con discussion on PDI. This suggests it is a black-and-white issue, but “Should we have change?” is not the appropriate question. The better question is: “What changes are appropriate to address employers’ needs for non-technical skills and improve the perceived value of the superintendent?”

The appropriate task is the continued development of this proposal into one that addresses the issues confronting our profession. We can’t ignore what we learned from the research.

I know from our work on the MSRG that aspects of this proposal are controversial, but that’s the role of leadership. The MSRG members welcome suggestions for improvement and will make a final proposal that takes into consideration all the comments and concerns of our members. It has been a great experience. I’m proud of my profession and especially proud of my association for taking a hard look at itself.

I invite you to find out more about the PDI and our reasons for recommending it. When you do, I believe you will come to the same conclusion: Change is demanded.

Ray Davies is CGCS at Crystal Springs GC in Burlingame, Calif., and a member of the GCSAA Membership Standards Resource Group. He can be reached at 650-342-4188 or rvdavies@pacbell.net.

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The Far Hills, N.J.-based U.S. Golf Association named Palmer Maples Jr., its 2000 recipient of the Green Section Award. Maples, 67, is a retired golf course superintendent from Summit Chase CC in Snellville, Ga. He was among the first to bring bentgrass greens to southern courses.

Tempe, Ariz.-based Pursell Technologies named Tim Lacy its director of customer and facility development. He was formerly director of sales with the company.

Don Ferreri, superintendent at Seven Bridges GC in Woodridge, Ill., was elected president of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

Dayton, N.J.-based Cleary Chemical appointed Dr. Paul Wagenbach its technical sales representative for Southern California, Arizona and Nevada.

Bob Finkelnbiner was promoted to marketing manager for golf in the irrigation division of Bloomington, Minn.-based The Toro Co.

CordeValle GC in San Jose, Calif., named Joe Root its director of golf.

Thomas L. Wutschke, professor of turfgrass science at Penn State University, will receive the 2000 President’s Award for Environmental Leadership from GCSAA.

David Ross was named national accounts manager for Wilmington, Del.-based Zeneca Professional Products. He will be responsible for coordinating all Zeneca activities with golf course management companies.

David Perkins was appointed director of U.S. power retailers and distributor sales for Charlotte, N.C.-based Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co. Husqvarna also appointed Kim Liechty as the director of the handheld product business unit.

Azusa, Calif.-based Rain Bird’s international division named Dale Anne Davidson its international golf sales manager. Rain Bird also named Matthew Zirkle as marketing manager in the golf division.

David Mutter joined Environmental Industries as vice president of sales and marketing. He is responsible for the overall sales and marketing programs for Environmental Industries, including Environmental Golf.

Joseph M. Hahn, CGCS, was elected president of the New York State Turfgrass Association. Hahn is superintendent at the Country Club of Rochester. The NYSTA also elected John Rizza of Turf Partners as vice president.

Tyler Enterprisest of Elwood (Ill.) awarded Blake Hoerr the $7500 Ben Warren Scholarship at the North Central Turfgrass Exposition Awards Luncheon.

The Hyatt Bear Creek GC in Dallas named Mike Bartlett as superintendent.

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Out of Bounds

classical music

It's not rock 'n' roll, but you may like it. While many don't give a second thought to classical music, they are missing something great.

Although we may have gleaned a few facts from movies such as Amadeus and from sitting through the kids' recitals, many of us believe classical music is difficult to comprehend. There are too many confusing numbers after tides.

But Ted Libbey, the host of NPR's Performance Today, is helping us better understand classical music. The second edition of his book, The NPR Guide to Building a Classical Music Collection, provides insight into what recordings are best for neophytes and what to listen to as you journey through this rich artistic form.

I know what you're thinking: "It's not my cup of tea," or "I just don't get it." Well, think about listening to classical in a different way. Think of those hard days at work, struggling to get the golf course ready for your members or a tournament. When dusk hits and it's time to go home, what music would you rather relax to — The Beastie Boys or Beethoven?

Classical music can soothe, as well as alternately challenge and inspire. Some recordings contain heartbreak and fear while others capture sheer joy. And best of all, with someone like Mozart, the music can be mischievous, cheeky and downright funny. But more than anything, the music is a welcome respite from our increasingly stressful world.

In the NPR Guide's introduction, Mstislav Rostropovich, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C., speaks passionately about classical music: "In order to feel its warmth and beauty, you have to shed your emotional insulation, just as if it were a coat, and prepare to listen with your heart."

While I have used Libbey's book to expand my musical horizons, I've also had the pleasure to make the acquaintance of Paul Horsley, program annotator and musicologist for the Philadelphia Orchestra and a contributing classical music writer to The New York Times.

Horsley has a way of talking about classical music that is encouraging, not snooty. Here are his Top 10 selections for classical music novices:

1. Arvo Pärt: Fratres (version by I. Fiammighi) — Proof that the remix was not the invention of New York DJs.
2. Bruckner: Symphony No. 9 (versions by Haitink, Walter, Wand, Skrowaczewski) — As background music for lovemaking, it rivals Sinatra.
3. Mikolay Gorecki: Symphony No. 3 (Symphony of Sorrowful Songs) — This symphony is partly a memorial to World War II and the Holocaust.
4. Messiaen: Quartet for the End of Time (version by Tashi) — He often stated that the purpose of his art was to express faith. Yet the intense delight it contains is both smaller and larger than mere religious experience.
5. Beethoven: Symphony No. 7 (any version) — At times warmly cheerful, at times gravely serious, it is one of those works in which every detail seems exactly right.
7. Schubert: Die schöne Müllerin (The Lovely Milleress) — It's not for sissies.
8. Bach: Jauchzet Gott, Cantata No. 51 — There's almost no bad Bach, and this one advanced the idea of "prima donna."
9. Mahler: Symphony No. 4 — Fifty years ago, no one's Top 10 list would have included a work by Mahler. Now anyone's collection is incomplete without it.
10. Copland: Fanfare for the Common Man, Appalachian Spring, Rodeo, El Salon Mexico (several discs contain all four pieces, or at least three) — Copland's music remains some of the most American-sounding of all.

Remember, it doesn't hurt to just listen, feel and relax when it comes to classical music.

Mark Luce, a freelance writer based in Lawrence, Kan., can play Chopsticks on the piano.
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