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The AERA-vator punches through our hard, compacted soil much better than any aerifier that I have ever seen. I previously owned a crankshaft style machine that did nothing more than bounce off the ground. I use the AERA-vator primarily to relieve compaction in our high traffic areas as well as the "hot spot" areas to allow for better water penetration. The vibration effect really enables the tines to break through hard soil with ease. I use it on fairways without the PTO engaged for minimal turf disruption and still get three inches into the soil. The AERA-vator also works great to prep burned out areas that need reseeding.

Mike Snyder
Golf Course Superintendent
Sun Lake Golf Course
Banning, California

Squaring Off On PDI

Continued from page 40
quirement. How do you compare turf programs? Requirements are too stiff for some and not hard enough for others. Eventually, it is going to be the competency tests and the self-evaluations (that are most problematic). How are they going to be used and how do you keep people from cheating? Also, the tracking of these and the security issues could be the most expensive part of PDI.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?
It will raise the value of Class A membership. More courses will have GCSAA Class A members. The course that doesn't have a superintendent with minimum qualifications will be questioned.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?
More growth, more cost and a membership held in higher esteem.

Kerry Satterwhite, CGCS
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF GC MAINTENANCE; BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

Why do you think PDI is being proposed?
We have seen an evolution of superintendents over the past 15 to 20 years, but the public perception has not changed. We are struggling not only for identity, but for recognition for our accomplishments. Our responsibilities have become increasingly diversified, as have the many day-to-day issues we deal with. Many of us are still viewed as "grass cutters" when we have become so much more. For us to be recognized as more, we had to launch an initiative that would help us achieve that.

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?
I would have to say that I support it as is. I have some concerns about how it will affect ALL of the members of GCSAA, but its positives far outweigh its negatives. What has to be taken into consideration is what is best for the majority of the association now and in the future. The proposal is in the long-term best interests of most of the association members. I favor stricter standards. It should be more difficult to become certified and maintain your certification status. In fact, a level above CGCS should be created.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?
The provision that has created the most controversy is the (degree) requirement and how that will impact the classification system. This profession has always provided the opportu-
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Squaring Off On PDI

Continued from page 42

I don't support PDI as written. I would agree to PDI with some revisions. But you must keep in mind that it is not written. We have been told time and again that it is not set in stone, which makes forming an opinion difficult. I'm 100 percent against the degree requirement in any form.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?
The degree requirement and the HR Web.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?
If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?
The membership will suffer. It won't be able to reach the 45 percent of superintendents who aren't members now, and GCSAA may lose many members. GCSAA might get some competition from another association.

Rick Niemier
CLASS A; MARION, IOWA

Why do you think the PDI is being proposed?
The Membership Standards Resource Group is saying is that GCSAA needs minimum standards to be able to promote superintendents to employers, and the three years of being employed as a superintendent is too little. Most people who become superintendents work at least five years in the business before they become a superintendent. Some who are already Class A and CGCS want to make it harder to become a Class A. They feel it's too easy to reach Class A status.

The GCSAA is a very political association, and those involved generally do not...
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ship drop? At first, probably yes, but with the mass influx of turf school graduates, it will probably level off. I can't believe it will grow at the previous rate. And the 50 percent of all superintendents who do not belong now will never join.
Corey Eastwood
Stockton G&CC; Stockton, Calif.

In time, PDI will make all of us better superintendents. It will enhance our education and make it specific to our needs. We will be better recognized by employers and golfers. You will see superintendents who are the most educated and highly respected become members of the management team.

Ross O'Fee, CGCS
The Country Club; Park City, Utah

I support PDI as it's written. It would be shortsighted to think it's a static program. It will evolve as need arises. There has been a tremendous amount of thought put into it, but that doesn't mean it's perfect.
Tom Schlick, CGCS
Marriott Golf, Orlando

Do you support it as written, with some revisions or oppose it outright? Why? How would you revise it?

I don't support it as written and changes need to be made before I will lend my support. The education requirement (degree for future Class A) needs to be dropped. The proficiency profiles need to be thought out more. Many potential problems exist when this information could be released.

Which, if any, provisions seem to be the most problematic?

The degree requirement to attain Class A, required proficiency profiles and the fact that many things such as cost, number of continuing education credits and professional development units, and grandfathering have not been finalized.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on the PROFESSION in 20 years?
It will have forced many lower-budget superintendents to drop their GCSAA memberships. With the dual membership requirement that passed a few years ago, they will also not be able to join their local associations. The result: more superintendents with few educational opportunities.

If PDI is passed as written, what impact will it have had on GCSAA in 20 years?
GCSAA will represent higher-end clubs, but most lower- and mid-budget courses will not be represented. These lower- and mid-budget superintendents will have no voice.
A

nswer this simple question: Should a Class A superintendent be classified as a professional occupation? If you answered no, stop reading and turn to another page. If you answered yes, can we talk?

GCSAA's Professional Development Initiative Committee has embarked on a multi-year process, through research and member involvement, to create a meaningful Class A brand that will have credibility in the marketplace. (Your chapter should call GCSAA and schedule a speaker from the PDI resource group so you can learn more before it's voted on in 2001.)

Doctors, lawyers, accountants, pilots, electrical engineers, architects and Ph.D.s don't just dabble in their fields of interest for three years and earn the title doctor of medicine, certified public accountant, captain or professor. But dabbling is all it currently takes to be designated as a Class A golf course superintendent.

Doctors qualify through attending medical school and residency, and lawyers qualify by going to law school and passing the bar exam. Right now, to be a Class A superintendent, you only have to fill in your name and occupation on your tax returns and membership renewal forms for three years.

There's nothing required in writing that says you've had any training in agronomy or any other skills needed by a superintendent. You could be the owner's nephew, who likes to play golf, and be given the title of superintendent.

Three years of paying dues and you're a Class A. What's wrong with this picture?

What's wrong is that competency levels are all over the place, and Class A doesn't mean anything without some sort of universal basic education, training and experience requirements. That's why the GCSAA PDI Committee and resource group continues to explore ways to standardize the training necessary to attain Class A status through various combinations of formal education and experience.

The industry has grown to the point where just being a hard-working good ol' boy isn't going to cut it when faced with environmental regulations, OSHA health and safety issues, the American Disabilities Act, Labor and EOE laws and other issues facing a manager in today's workplace. If course management wants to play dumb and stick its head in the sand, then it can still have a "superintendent." That person just won't be called a Class A professional.

I'm tired of the boo birds raising the Twinkie defense by saying "my club can't afford my dues, won't pay for continuing education, won't pay for travel . . . blah, blah, blah." Today's world is full of people who don't take responsibility for their actions. There are a 100 ways to finance your training and education if it's important enough to become a Class A superintendent. If you can't, don't or won't do what's necessary, then be the best Class B superintendent you can be.

There's no good reason the high achievers in the profession have to be kept down by the lowest common denominators. There's too much at stake to keep protecting the status of those superintendents who are not participating in their chapters, not attending meetings or not engaging in continuing education. If the PDI is approved, current Class As will be grandfathered in — but they will have to expend a little more time and effort to maintain that classification.

This initiative isn't GCSAA staff members creating a monster — it's superintendents trying to give credibility, marketability and widespread respectability to a brand name that people will recognize as a trained professional.

When you walk into a physician's office and see that doctor of medicine degree on the wall, you assume that person has attained a minimum standard of training and experience. Why should a golf club expect anything less from a Class A superintendent?

Joel Jackson, CGCS, director of communications for the Florida GCSA, can be reached at flgrn@aol.com.

If We’re A-ces, We Should Earn It

BY JOEL JACKSON

THE INDUSTRY HAS GROWN SO QUICKLY THAT JUST BEING A HARD-WORKING GOOD OL’ BOY ISN'T GOING TO CUT IT
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BY LARRY AYLWARD, MANAGING EDITOR