

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ray:

This is in response to "Motherhood, Apple-Pie and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America" written by Robert E. Siebert in the March issue of the **Bull Sheet**.

Obviously, it is in order for the President of the GCSAA to respond to this article as it was the main target of criticism in the article. I feel that those who choose to use sophisticated concepts such as "cost benefit ratio" and "management by objective" should first, understand the underlying principles of these concepts and then use data which clearly supports their argument.

Mr. Siebert makes a case which would indicate that the average GCSAA member is receiving 16 cents on the dollar in the form of membership activities and services. Although his article was well presented, the method used in arriving at his conclusions are fallacious.

He indicates that membership benefits in relationship to total GCSAA income were 14.7% during 1975 and 14% during 1976. This statement, when viewed on the basis of the way he computed it is, in fact, true. However, the fallacy lies in the manner in which it was computed. Are we to believe that the only direct benefit of membership in the GCSAA is membership insurance and membership activities and services? Further, are we to believe that the GCSAA membership dues in fact provide \$754,260.38 in income to the GCSAA? Mr. Siebert goes on and does include the Directory and Newsletter as a direct membership service bringing the percentage to 15.98% and 16.93% for fiscal years 1975 and 1976 respectively. Accordingly, he would have his readers believe that during 1976 only 16.93% of a member's dues was returned to him in the form of services.

Even a cursory examination of Exhibit B (statement of income and expense) which was sent to all GCSAA members would indicate more membership services than what is indicated in Mr. Siebert's calculations. We feel that we can all agree that THE GOLF SUPERINTENDENT is indeed a very viable and tangible membership service. Mr. Siebert conveniently forgot the \$182,085.62 which was spent on this membership service. He also neglected to mention the \$37,980.57 spent on the officers and committee expenses necessary for the effective operation of the Association. But most important of all, he would have us believe that the membership contributed \$754,260.38 to the Association when in fact, membership dues accounted for only \$250,306.52. This then, coupled with the \$40,107.35 should be the base on which all calculations are made and not \$754,260.38 as he suggests.

Of each \$90.00 received from a member of GCSAA, \$15.96 goes to insurance premiums. This one membership benefit alone returns 17.96% of the members' dollars to him in the form of a direct benefit. If we take membership dues (\$195,054.76), insurance premiums (\$55,251.76) and membership activities and services (\$40,107.35) we have a total of \$290,413.87. This is the total income derived by the Association directly from members. If we then take our expenses in the form of insurance premiums (\$55,251.76), membership activities and services (\$50,560.67), officers and committee expenses (\$37,980.57), the Directory and Newsletter (\$14,778.02) and the cost of publishing THE GOLF SUPERINTENDENT (\$182,085.62) we arrive at a total of \$340,656.64 for those very real and tangible services each and

every member of GCSAA receives. On this basis alone, the member receives 117% of his membership dues in direct membership benefits.

We would indicate here that the above calculations do not consider **any** general and administrative expenses such as salaries, payroll taxes, depreciation, telephone, rent of equipment, etc. Therefore, if some how GCSAA could provide the above services without an office, the membership would receive services which cost GCSAA 117% of the dues paid by its members. Obviously this is not possible and unquestionably refutes the arguments made by Mr. Siebert.

Hopefully you would note that other sources of income are necessary. This income is derived by GCSAA from selling advertising in THE GOLF SUPERINTENDENT and through Conference and Show activities.

Additionally, the numbers above and in Mr. Siebert's article were based on the audit of the fiscal year which concluded June 30, 1976 and in no way were reflective of a dues increase. We have not given a financial report reflecting our dues increase of 42% (Mr. Siebert mentioned a 50% increase in dues).

We would point out that Exhibit B of the audit indicates that all general and administrative expenses for the running of the Association increased by only \$15,922.01 which is a 5.5% increase based on actual dollars spent. How many golf course superintendents boast of a 5.5% increase in the cost of managing their golf courses? What if our performances on the golf course were measured by a "cost benefit ratio?"

There are indeed, as the second part of Mr. Siebert's article suggests, many regional problems that can not be solved at a national level. We do not believe that public relations and communications fall in that category. If the golf course superintendent in any region is to be recognized as a true professional and not as a "grass cutter" this information must be wide spread and fully recognized by the lay public everywhere. This can only be accomplished on a national basis.

If, in fact, the Mid-West superintendents do withdraw the \$25,000.00 per year from the GCSAA and take on the task set forth in Mr. Siebert's proposal, they will soon find out how very small that contribution will be in relationship to the tasks.

I hope that this letter can set the record straight. The benefits that each member of GCSAA receives far exceeds his dues of \$90.00 each year. To suggest, as Mr. Siebert has done, that Members only receive only 16 cents on the dollar is misleading at best.

I hope that the facts above are not embarrassing to anyone. My intent is to set the record straight. I feel that although well intended, Mr. Siebert is misconstruing what is being said in our financial reports.

Ted Woehrle, President, GCSAA
Past President of the Midwest Association
of Golf Course Superintendents 1961
Past Editor of THE BULL SHEET for five years

MIDWEST MEETING DATES

May 16 -	Ravinia Green
June 6 -	Beverly
July 18 -	Aurora
August -	Indian Lakes
	Joint Meeting ITF
September -	
October -	
November 19 -	River Forest Dinner Dance

Dr. Tom Perkins, of the Elanco Co. will speak at our M.A.G.C.S. May 16 meeting on "New Products Evaluation" and "Pesticide Development".