

Dear Pete:

Thank you and your colleagues in the Midwest for renewing my membership in the Midwest. It is a delight to be again elected as a teammate of the fellows with whom my brother Joe and I have worked for the happiness of golfers and the beauty of the country for so many years.

Pete, I am reminded that Joe, who has been gone four years now, was one of those who began getting the Midwest organized. And that was right after he returned from W.W. 1 and was with the old Golfers' magazine and before we started Chicago Golfer which I remember helped John McGregor and a few other greenkeepers and pro-greenkeepers start the Midwest. Golfers now don't know ... or have forgotten ... that a lot of the early history of golf course construction and management as a business, a science and a profession really started around Chicago. Charles Macdonald, founder of Chicago Golf Club, was a bossy old guy, smart and a power in getting the Green Section under way. He gave American golf new ideas by starting Chicago Golf construction. His son-in-law, H. J. Whigham, the second amateur champion, in his book on playing golf published in 1897, went into such impressive detail about course construction and maintenance that he wrote that a good golf course (in property and construction) could cost as much as "\$50,000 hard cash". And Bob White, who was pro-greenkeeper at Ravisloe and later became in 1915 the first president of the PGA, was the first guy in golf to go to a short course at a university for education in maintenance. He went to the U. of Wisconsin for what then was called "the farmers' winter school". He built other courses and served as pro-greenkeeper and died at Myrtle Beach, S.C. where he was one of the first pros to own a good part of a golf real estate development. Some of the rest of that earlier Midwest story in course maintenance is around my desk somewhere in an almost finished story I promised Gerber or one of your other teammates. The influence of the convenient stock yards in Chicago with tons of cheap organic fertilizer, and the early Green Section experimental satellites at Westmoreland and Lasker's Mill Road seem to be quite significant as I wrote them. But I am legally blind and I miss so damn many keys in pecking out copy. My typing is said by scholars to read like two-fingered broken Polish. And at 89 I get tired, and being alone here working at night begin to think "What the hell, I am drinking too much". So there goes the history of our novel art and science shot dead in the ass.

But your comment about the status of the greenkeepers or superintendents as the managers of golf courses and grounds ... whatever you want to call them ... aroused me.

Of course these fellows are short in many ways of the recognition, reward and the coordinated usefulness and value they damn well merit. And to put it sharply, Pete, I think it is because they are damn poor advertisers and talk to themselves too much instead of to their customers ... who are not only golfers but the immense number of Americans who are influenced by and responsive to the vast scope of the golf course man's leadership in beautifying America.

Pete, it's been about a dozen years since Joe and I sold Golfdom and Golf and retired. We got out at the right time. Both magazines, which were good money-makers, have been absorbed and vanished.

And let me tell you I learned something while golf business was going through change of life. I as the editor and Joe as the publisher had been very lucky to escape being losers by staying so long and so strong with the employees instead of accenting what we knew about the employers from whom all blessings flow; the amateurs.

And you can bet your ass that the USGA, which is headed by some all-star business talent and has about 1,500 committee members to assure government by consent of the governed, is updating and adjusting to the present.

The superintendents don't see their accomplishments or know how, in most cases, to convert them into relative money terms. Even while realizing that only about half the 10,000 U.S. golf course are 18 holes or larger I'd estimate that the superintendents net earning has improved one hell of a lot better than the pros in the past decade.

Think of the golf courses that have annual maintenance budgets of \$150,000 a year or over and how damn few pro departments ... including probably the cart revenue too, is higher.

And I wouldn't be a damn bit surprised now if the superintendents at major golf courses didn't have about the same ... maybe higher percent of college degrees as the members. And a hell of a lot more than pros even with golf athletic scholarships.

And think of the financial and business responsibility of the superintendent now. He is in charge of the whole damn plant which cost for the course maybe \$2,000,000 and cost \$300,000 a year to maintain. I know of some damn well built and managed courses in southwest Florida with maintenance cost of about a fourth per year of what it cost to build the places.

And there are damn few club members or officials I know who are aware that course superintendents take a day a month or more and at their own time and expense to go to meetings at other courses to learn how to do their own jobs better. Plenty of times I have told business executives of what superintendents at their golf courses do in this respect and hear the business bosses say they wish to hell they could get the same action and responsibility out of superintendents of their business plants.

Regardless of the versatility, vigor and low budget pressure on the supt. the man has got to look and act like the highly responsible executive he is instead of usually being seen, if he can't be identified, by members as a greasy, sweaty, one of the laborers. When he is in the clubhouse or at superintendent meetings he's got to look like a man in charge of the operation and maintenance of a property worth millions. There has been tremendous improvement in this selling picture. However, plenty of room for further improvement remains as the Everglades chapter of SW Florida's GCSA recently reminded its members in comment on the dress of superintendents when at meetings or playing at other courses.

The superintendents name on his headquarters and that place looking neat, smart and business like ... and maybe with a colorful garden or a test plot as part of the picture is good advertising.

In today's picture the superintendent at many clubs is netting more per year than the pro and without the inventory and payroll of the pro, but seldom is there much about the supts. looks and attitude to diplomatically indicate that it is the superintendent's job to provide the fundamentals of an attractive course that accounts primarily for the club's over-all success.

The superintendents local meetings rarely have space in the local papers or on the air for the simple reason the supts. have not learned how to tell their story, not only so that it makes the sports pages but where it would make business news and garden news in newspapers, TV and magazines - even in their own club magazines.

(continued on next page)



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Now, Pete, you see you have goosed me on a subject that I've been thinking about for years for the good of golf and golfers. Hell, I could write you a book on this need of golf course superintendents' informative advertising not only to help themselves but to make the picture more beautiful for all golfers and even the rest of the country.

Pete, the new chairman of the Green Section committee of the USGA is a great guy. I think you know, George Vard of Barrington. In the winter he has a home in Naples, about 30 miles south of me. George, as you know, was the Western Golf Assn. president and like other officials took a post graduate course in supts. headaches when the greens went out at Butler during a Western Open. I think that George as the Green Committee head and others of the high command of the USGA are considering a program that will spotlight the unique and immense public service of golf course superintendents that no other alignment of experts in any sport can match. From what I understand about the idea the USGA Green Section is considering proclaiming "Golf Makes American Beautiful" will be the greatest damn thing you ever could want in spotlighting the superintendents.

I hope to see you at Atlanta and tell you more about this notion which I think the supts. with the USGA can make one of the most talked about and valuable public services in sports.

Regards, and thanks to you and the old neighbor boys. The damn typewriter is on the bum and so am I.

Yours,
Herb Graffis

P.S. Pete, as you know I am legally blind so please forgive the typographical blunders and hope you'll be able to figure out what keys I intended to hit.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE ASSIGNMENTS "BULL SHEET"

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| July | Joe Williamson |
| August | Dave Behrman |
| September | Mike Hart |
| October | Ken Goodman |

Easy to follow instructions:

These articles are to be presented to the editor of the **Bull Sheet** one month prior to your month's assignment, i.e. John Stephenson - June - submit to editor by May 10, **no later!** All copies are to be double spaced and type written. You may pick a topic of editorial value or report on special interests related to turf and your profession. Get these articles in early so that Ray can work around your articles space. Be Prompt!

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