

CDGA — Superintendents Friend or Foe?

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Spring is just around the corner and winter losing its icy grip. New thoughts are focusing toward another season of golf and golf course management. During the past few months, most Superintendents have been involved in many meetings, learning and planning for the 1995 season.

In late January, I attended the CDGA Director Workshop held at Drury Lane. Although this event is really for Club Directors, my new Green Chairman and Club President asked me to accompany them. After a general introduction, the attendees broke into smaller groups for house, greens, membership, and finance committees. Historically, the CDGA had invited a local Superintendent each year to participate on the panel for answering questions in our area of expertise. Previously I had been a panelist and I must say it was a very rewarding and enjoyable experience, and I was really surprised this year when they introduced a local General Manager as their club employee Greens panelist.

Many thoughts went through my head, mostly skeptical. OK, maybe he does have a turf background like Mike Nass or Joe Williamson. Even though he, like many others, seemed to be unbiased, this was clearly not the case. This

should be interesting, I thought. It was no real surprise when the first subject out for discussion was "the value and importance of the General Manager". What is the CDGA trying to do to we Superintendents and our profession? We were quickly getting put in the management back seat with no prior warning. I had to say something, but it had to be carefully worded because I was a minority in this gathering and had not been invited to speak on the behalf of Superintendents or our profession.

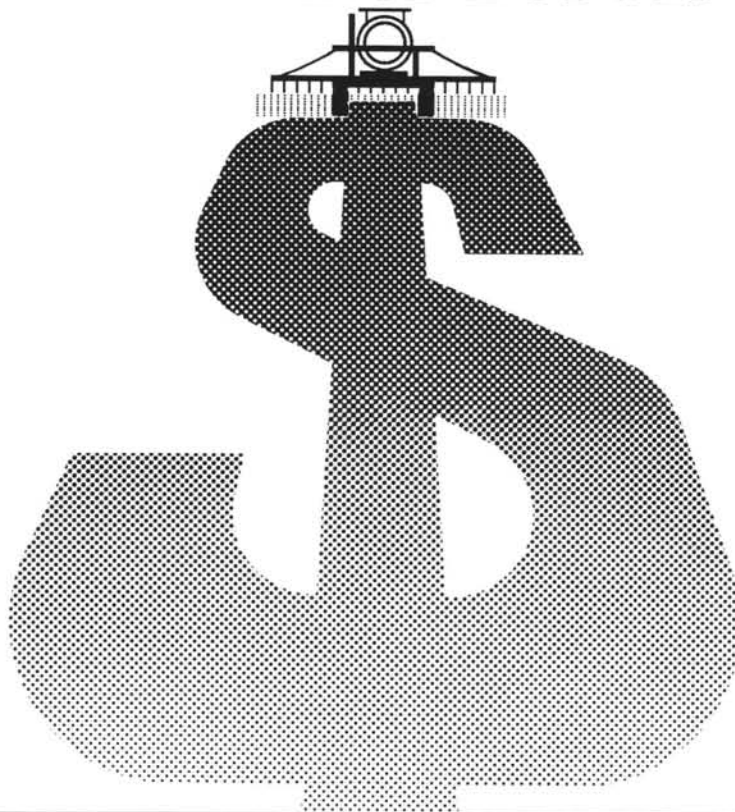
Fortunately, a Green Chairman from a prominent club expressed his views before I spoke up. He said that his club had gone back and forth, with and without a General Manager through recent years. As he referred to the General Manager concept, the Green Chairman said, "I think it is just a lot of lip service". Many in the audience chuckled and seemed to respond positively in our favor to his comment. The General Manager Panelist did say his role is mostly as a communication liaison and not for professional turf management guidance. Fortunately, the group was soon off to the next subject. Most of what followed was not damaging, other than when the General Manager Panelist was energetically promoting more employees and less overtime. This was tough for me to hear because I, like many Superintendents, continue to battle with my clubs' Board each year to keep funding overtime because the grounds staff needs every dollar they can earn. Many of these people are essential and without these additional dollars I am sure that I would lose them to better paying jobs or clubs. They barely support their families and

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survive now, even with the overtime because of the wages we are forced to offer. I brought this point to the floor and it was a consensus that little or no overtime would have a negative effect on employee morale and turnover. We know that training costs money and personal, mechanical, and agronomic mishaps are more likely to happen. Mistakes of this nature may last for a considerable length of time and involve significant recovery and rehabilitation costs.

Dr. Randy Kane and Joe Williamson were also on the panel and contributed some useful information. Because they are associated with the CDGA, I feel they had to remain somewhat neutral.

I don't intend to make waves or stir up emotions, but our industry has struggled too long to give up any progress toward advancement of our profession. We cannot allow our own CDGA to help place us in the back of the management bus, whether intentional or not.

We simply must make continuous changes and advancements for the good of our profession. The MAGCS has always been known to be professionally progressive with a considerable amount of management talent, expertise, and education in our area. We cannot allow that to be diminished or taken away.

Lastly, the golf course management industry and Superintendents must expand our public relations efforts to let the uninformed know what we truly are all about.



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