



*Kevin Czerkies  
Sportsman's C.C.*

**S**uperintendents are faced with many day-to-day challenges. For this month's Director's Column, I would like to share some thoughts on a few of them.

There are many different salesmen that call on superintendents. They sell pesticides, fertiliz-

ers, turf equipment, shop equipment, golf course accessories, miracle cleaners, light bulbs, nuts, bolts, wasp spray and anything else you could possibly think of that somehow relates to the maintenance of a golf course. Many of these items we do need to purchase from time to time. How we decide which products, and from whom to purchase them, is the challenge. They all claim that their product is superior to their competitors. Two services that have really become popular and quite competitive are deep tine/drill aerification and bulk application of fertilizers to fairways and roughs in spreader trucks.

On a smaller scale, we've all experienced the salesman with a suitcase in one hand and a 3,000-page catalog in the other. These guys always show up unannounced, and they have the save-all product that will make our jobs

ten times easier. They try to give you a screwdriver or flashlight if you give them an order. They all sell the same orange scented, all-purpose cleaner. Same stuff, only different name.

One of my biggest problems is when I purchase turf care equipment. Being a government body, I am required to obtain sealed bids for any purchase over \$10,000. This makes it difficult to always get the equipment that I really want. I can write a very tight bid specification around a certain piece of equipment, but this limits the qualified bidders. Often only one company can meet my bid specifications. This somewhat defeats the whole purpose of bidding. Or, I can write a loose specification and have to explain why I don't want to purchase from the lowest bidder. This can be quite trying when you have a board

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# Ray Gerber Editorial Award

## Guidelines

1. Articles eligible for the award must be written by a member of the MAGCS who is currently a Golf Course Superintendent. All articles published in *On Course* meeting this requirement will be considered; however, the On Course With the President, Director's Column and the Super-N-Site articles will not be eligible.
2. Eligible articles include those published in the September through August editions of *On Course*.
3. Judging of the articles will be based on the following criteria:
  - a. Article provides useful technical data or information.
  - b. The article is clear and easy to read.
  - c. Illustrations, tables, photographs, charts, etc., help to explain or support the text and add to the article's value.
  - d. The article is timely (information is current and is presented at the appropriate time of the season).
  - e. The article is useful to the superintendent in the performance of his duties and responsibilities.
4. Articles originally published elsewhere and then published in *On Course* will not be considered for the award.
5. There must be at least six articles in a qualifying year (September through August) to be considered. If less than six articles qualify in any one year, those qualifying will be carried over to the next year(s) until there are six articles to be judged.
6. A panel of five judges will select the winning entry. The panel will consist of the MAGCS President, the CDGA pathologist, a staff member from the University of Illinois, a retired superintendent and the Editor.

*Editors note: See this year's award contestants on page 28.*

### Director's Column

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member who thinks he knows as much about turf maintenance and equipment as we do.

In the public sector, we are often compared to the conditions of private clubs. My park district officials sometime get the opportunity to play private country clubs. They often wonder why our golf course is not maintained to such conditions as the Knollwood, Skokie, or Ivanhoe type of courses are. Simply put, the public golf courses have to be maintained to handle 50,000 rounds in a year. This means having your greens stimp at 7 to 8 feet, instead of 10 feet plus. When the golfers are pushed off the first tee every eight

to nine minutes from dawn to dusk, seven days a week, it is very difficult to get tasks done. At Sportsman's, we do the majority of our pesticide applications at night. I don't feel comfortable doing it at night because of not being able to see if I have a clogged nozzle or if the sprayer has a problem; but with the amount of play that we receive, we are left with little choice of when to spray. Another maintenance practice that is hard to get accomplished with so many golfers is topdressing greens. Kiln dried sand has helped with that challenge.

Superintendents at every golf course, be it public or private, are faced with challenges in the field of greenkeeping. It is imperative

that you stay attuned to what's happening out there. That doesn't mean just going to educational seminars in the winter. You have to get out to other golf courses during the season. After all, you are being compared to the other clubs, so take advantage of opportunities to play and visit other clubs. You may just pick up an idea or two on how to solve some of the challenges that you are faced with. ■