



Assistant Superintendent Plight

The dog days are upon us and soon school bells will be ringing signaling the end of another summer vacation. I hope everybody had an excellent summer. Hopefully this season wasn't a back-breaker like the last for the majority of superintendents in our area.

I congratulate Ken Lapp and Cog Hill Golf Club for an excellent venue and great conditioning of the course. Next year the format will change and the tournament will be held in September. Ken, you and your crew have done an excellent job providing outstanding entertainment at your facility – thank you. This month, the PGA Championship will be held at Medinah CC beginning on the 14th. Hopefully you will get a chance to stop by and take a needed break and enjoy the fruits of Tom Lively, CGCS and staff. Good luck Tom and Medinah CC, we all look forward to another fantastic event.

One competition that was completed in May is the Bird Watching Open. Once again Olympia Fields Country Club was #1 for the Best of the Mississippi and Great Lakes Flyway with seventy-four different species identified. Olympia Fields was followed closely by Village Links of Glen Ellyn with sixty-seven species identified. There were a total of eight courses in our region that participated on that rainy day and I want to say thank you for your involvement:

Though it may seem very difficult to land a superintendent job, it occurs.

CLUB/COURSE	SPECIES IDENTIFIED
Olympia Fields Country Club	(74)
Village Links of Glen Ellyn	(67)
Springbrook Golf Course	(59)
Prestwick Country Club	(58)
Itasca Country Club	(42)
Bryn Mawr Country Club	(31)
Mt. Prospect Golf Course	(28)
Salt Creek Golf Club	(23)

On to Our Assistants

All Regular Members have been down the professional career road looking for the first superintendent position. Remember hoping and wishing that a certain golf course would offer you the job? You wanted nothing more than to apply your education and your experiences to improve the golf course and make it your own. This process still occurs every time there is a vacancy for a golf course superintendent position. Each person in the application process goes through the thought process of taking the helm, initiating the changes they would make, and thinking of the sacrifices that would have to be given. It is a tough profession and even tougher for assistant superintendents to become recognized for their dedication, devotion and education. Though it may seem very difficult to land a superintendent job, it occurs. Each time a position becomes available, there is a large number of qualified applicants in the pool

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comprised of veteran superintendents and willing assistants. It is always difficult to say who will get called for an interview and ultimately the job and I wish you all the best of luck and encourage you to persevere.

I have noticed in recent years a number of assistant superintendents that are moving laterally, changing career tracks within the profession and leaving the industry altogether. This movement seems to be on the rise. My concerns, these are my personal views, are that some of these assistants set themselves up to fail because of their standards for their dream job have been set too high. There is no doubt that influence is strong from educators, mentors and our society in general, to always have the best of everything. However, reality does not always agree with these imposed viewpoints. Any profession can be viewed as a pyramid with the best at the top. Our industry can only support so many golf courses and premiere positions at the top of the pyramid. Needless to say, there are


often many positions that are overlooked because they do not always meet the criteria of today's applicant. I can only encourage you to take a look at your goals and realize limitations built in to the system. Take a look at your priorities in life, including your family, friends and career. Ask yourself, where do you want to be in twenty years?

It is a tough road for the Assistant Superintendent. The golf industry has changed since the 90's, fewer courses are being built and opened which translates to fewer positions. There are more specialty positions such as irrigation and spray technicians as the profession gets more and more technical, however there are still only so many superintendent jobs. I know when I was working my way up from grounds staff to superintendent I tried to involve myself with every aspect within the maintenance operation. I urge you to do the same. Learn what a good equipment technician does, spend some time with them (get your hands dirty), create your own spray

program, design a landscape and try your hand at course layout. Look at your career as a learning experience. I know most of you love what you do and this is the most important concern that will lead you to success.



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