



## Environment spotlight

Thanks for the recent article "On the greener side" in *Golf Course Industry* (March, page 42). I know it means a great deal to our members to be highlighted for their dedication and hard work. Pat Blum at Colonial Acres, Tim Powers at Crystal Springs, Dave Phipps at Stone Creek, and Drew Cummins at Red Tail Golf Club deserve to be in the limelight. Thanks for keeping the good work of environmental stewards at the forefront of your readers.

**Jean Mackay**

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## Good pay

After reading Jim McLoughlin's "Club management options" column (March, page 26), I'm not sure I agree entirely with his premise that contract management doesn't attract the better superintendents or pay well.

I've been working with the top agronomic officers from the nation's largest multicourse companies for several years. I haven't met many brighter, better paid, more confident superintendent leaders in other golf circles. These guys/gals aren't visible in GCSAA activities or outside their companies because they're too busy, but they're terrific agronomically and as business people. They have a good handle on the return on investment of everything they're doing on the golf course. They're not just spenders but recognize they and their teammates have to have ownership of the bottom line of club operations. The superintendents of these companies are learning it doesn't always make sense to improve maintenance conditions beyond what's economically sensible. I'm not sure that's easily learned.

So, perhaps at the lowest level of these corporations, superintendents aren't necessarily the highest earners, but most of the multicourse company c.e.o.s will let you know superintendents are their most valuable commodity, and they're paying them well. Most importantly, one can move up the ladder if he/she is good and wishes to move up without the trauma of having to find a new employer.

The happy medium between the committee system, general manager system and contract maintenance is golf course maintenance contracting managed by a strong general manager.

This brings all parties back into the game, yet lends expertise to an area not well understood by most g.m.s or club committees.

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## Association politics

Jim McLoughlin's column ("A two-year presidency," April, page 24) makes too much sense. For years, I've asked why GCSAA members are funding travel expenses for the board. Superintendents fight for every penny and justify their spending down to the dwindling dollar. Steve Mona is the figurehead of the association and has done an amazing job in his tenure. However, he's a paid employee of the GCSAA and should attend those functions as our c.e.o. and lobbyist in the field. The trips for the board, and sometimes their spouses, seem fiscally extreme. This is one of several reasons why some superintendents won't join the association. They might have a valid point. This isn't a completely outrageous perk considering the amount of time board members spend away from their jobs and families. Unfortunately, in this day and age, perception is reality.

Also, look at the committees. The GCSAA tells the "no name" superintendents, in the interest of having better representation, they can be on a committee only every other year at the most. That's fair, and I, as many, have accepted that. What isn't consistent is when a high-profile superintendent is allowed to stay on a committee year after year with no rotation off unless he asks not to be added. I make a logical plea to the GCSAA management team that the high-profile superintendent is no better than the superintendent at a nine-hole course in Anytown, USA, who works his ass to the bone on a small budget and has to be creative and imaginative on his own. Because this type of superintendent is using his head and instincts for survival not publicity, he might have better ideas for the middle-of-the-road guys that aren't in same monetary league as the big clubs. Every superintendent deserves any accolades he/she gets because of all the monsters, real or imaginative, they face daily.

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