

# Letters to the editor

## An Open Letter To An Open Letter

*Dear Brother Superintendent Caranci:*

In your open letter in the June issue of GOLFDOM you have questioned my backbone and honesty and refer to my article as inconsistent and impractical. I had to refer back to my own writing to make sure you were referring to the piece I wrote. I will take up your objections one by one.

The article was unsigned for two reasons: to reply in kind to a similar article by a golf professional in an earlier issue, also anonymous, and to spare possible embarrassment to those I have been associated with, past and present.

In regard to my writing "fiction," my experiences parallel most of my fellow superintendents and if you

have not had similar problems and thoughts you must have led a very sheltered professional career indeed.

You also seem to doubt that the average salary in this area is \$10,000. I am only a few hours by car from you and I ask you to check your own New England Association survey (1964 or 65) which shows an average of \$9,300. Our own association survey about the same time was slightly higher and in view of the generally increasing salaries I felt justified in rounding it off to \$10,000.

If you had been reading GOLFDOM as avidly as you pursued my article, you would have realized that my reference to milkmen was a tongue-in-cheek jibe at an article in an earlier issue by a superintendent comparing the two jobs—and the point IS the skill involved. I thought this was made very clear. As a point of information, union scale here is \$3.70 per hour, time and a half for over 40 hours and double Sundays and holidays, for milk tanker drivers.

My "slam at long hours" was my opinion that too often the superintendent is forced, or feels compelled to LABOR above and beyond the call of duty. As you state, we are engaged

to SUPERVISE, my point exactly.

That there is friction between many pros and supers, and chairmen and supers is no figment of my imagination, as a straw poll of any group of turfmen will prove. I do not condone, encourage or revel in it. I mentioned it to make the problem known to the many readers of GOLFDOM who are no doubt unaware that the problem even exists—and the influence it can have on the operation of a course.

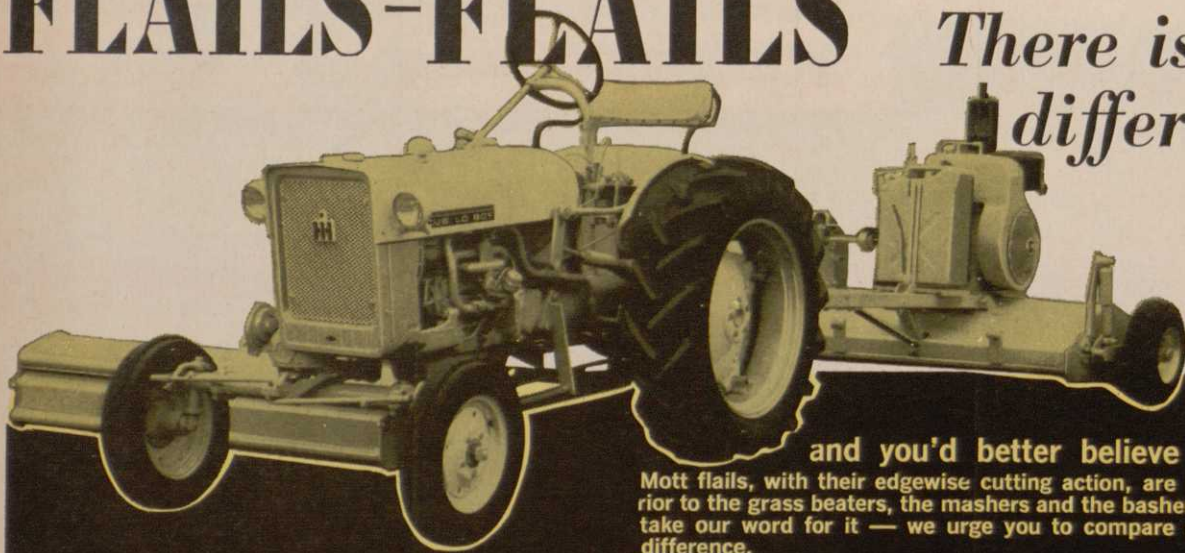
That most superintendents do realize the importance of the members and their chairmen is evident in the condition of most golf courses. But to write of all the pleasures and joys of my craft was not the purpose of the article and would have defeated the "Confessions" theme of the piece.

You conclude by saying my effort did "nothing to enhance the plight of the superintendent." In my Webster's, plight is defined as a dangerous or distressed condition. I do not now, nor have I ever, considered my chosen life's work as qualifying for such a description. Thus, I have no desire to be a greens chairman or a milk truck driver. A Pro? Well, I will keep working on my backswing.

*Continued*

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I note that you sign your name as the president of The Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England. I hope that this was an error on your part and that your letter expressed your opinion as an individual and not as spokesman for my many friends in your area who accepted my article as it was written—some candid remarks with the best interests of all golf course superintendents in mind.

*Bill Smart  
Powelton Club  
Newburgh, N.Y.*

### Another Rebuttal

*Dear Sir:*

In rebuttal to "An open letter to a superintendent" by the gentleman from New England in the June issue;

It is evident that the president from New England has not been in the Middle-West or West, and has not had the misfortune to contend with a pro who had just completed his apprentice training—at a PGA school where turf management is taught. Neither has he had the opportunity of working with a manager or city manager who are experts in all fields, or greens chairmen who have nothing to do but to make a superintendent's job miserable. (Keep in mind that the superintendent is well qualified.) Also, they do not recognize the title of superintendent, but insist on calling you a greenskeeper. And if you don't hold yourself in abeyance and anonymity, you won't have a job a week.

To quote a statement by Mr. Caranci; "In this day and age, the golf course superintendent is sick and tired of hearing about the pitfalls of his profession." (I just wonder who creates these pitfalls). I'm inclined to believe that the president from New England has undoubtedly very pleasant surroundings. But, if he were to spend one week in our area, he would be in sympathy with "Anonymous." And he would also become anonymous—a necessity to the retention of a career in the golf business.

I can offer you all the proof you desire. I, too, am a president of a local, and have been actively engaged for over a score of years in this confused profession. And it's getting more complex day by day. I envy you and your area. I would gladly pack up and move to an area where there is freedom for a man to let others know of his beliefs and ideas without danger of repression or the necessity of becoming anonymous.

*Ray Hall, President  
Minnesota Golf Course  
Superintendents Association*

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