

Feedback

In defense of GCSAA

In response to James Graham's letter, "GCSAA none of the way," (January GB) I, too feel GCSAA has lost sight of the priorities established by Col. John Morley and others in 1926. Our executive committee has sacrificed the education of the membership for a fairly unsuccessful public relations campaign which has done little to enhance the stature of the superintendent.

Furthermore, I agree with Mr. Graham's contention a more "stringent Code of Ethics" and an Ethics Review Board "with teeth" is needed.

However, I find it hard to accept Mr. Graham's assertions that a "certification examination" and a "bachelors degree, or equivalency, in an applicable major" be required prior to admission to our association. His proposals should not be a prerequisite for, but a benefit of membership. It is the responsibility of GCSAA to provide its members every opportunity to gain the expertise Mr. Graham expects, if the individual so chooses.

It would be self-defeating to limit membership in GCSAA by imposing Mr. Graham's standards "across the board." I have been privileged to know many of the old "greens-keepers" who consistently produce quality playing conditions and maintain a high degree of efficiency in their operations. At the same time I have known some educated, certified, "bona fide" incompetents whose performance leaves much to be desired. CGCS does not, under any circumstances, insure success.

As for the elimination of "commercial members," I do not understand what would be accomplished by refusing membership to these people. If abuses have occurred in the past, superintendents must share the blame. Many "commercial members" are former superintendents with valuable knowledge and experience. I know many who have shared their expertise with me, but I feel I am under no obligation to buy their products. "Commercial members" reminds one of the old line about "living next door to one but not letting my daughter marry one."

Finally, I am young and possibly naive. If superintendents are relinquishing their "high-paying, rewarding positions to amateurs promoted to their highest level of incompetence" then I must question the knowledge and expertise of the "qualified" person in the first place. Something is amiss if Mr. Graham's "competent" associates are being replaced by "felons." Possibly the problem is not just a club trying to hold salaries down.

No one will drag my "reputation and salary into the mire" as long as I carry out my responsibilities.

William R. Roberts
Superintendent
Stevens Point (Wis.) CC

• We also would like to respond to Mr. Graham's letter. The GCSAA is a national professional organization dedicated to better turf for better golf. The more members we can enroll means the greater the number of people involved in maintaining excellent turf. Every organization has its flaws and it's up to its members to improve and make the organization work for them.

The men we have elected as our leaders are highly qualified. They have worked hard to get us this far. Education is the most important task of the GCSAA. Someday perhaps a Bachelors Degree or the equivalent will be required for entrance into the association. But there are already a large number of members who have reached the equivalent of, or surpassed, a bachelors degree through various courses, seminars, etc. and working experience over the years as a superintendent. This experience is what our association was founded on, by men who learned as they worked and wanted to share their knowledge with others. A professional wants to work with others to improve his own profession.

Board of Directors Heart of America GCSA

• I've read various articles by individuals who because of their disagreements with certain policies of the GCSAA, PGA, or CMAA have dropped their membership from these organizations. This certainly doesn't seem to be the solution to the problem. Quitting solves nothing. Working harder in that organization and becoming more involved does seem to present a more sensible solution. The GCSAA has many committees which allow its members to become actively involved in its policy-making decisions. All an individual has to do is volunteer to serve on these committees. Also, a member always has the option to run for the board of directors of that organization. So, there are quite a few choices a member has to voice his opinion in a national association.

Sitting back and complaining or quitting are the easy ways out. An organization is only as strong as its members; the more they participate, the better the organization.

Dave Fearls, CGCS
Past President
Central Ill. GCSA
Peoria

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Feedback

Be a teacher first

In your August issue you carried a very fine statement in this department by Mac Hunter. I sensed there would be some flak resulting, and in your November/December issue Bob Gutwein gave a rather shallow and petty rebuttal.

Teaching is one of the prime responsibilities of the "complete" golf pro. It is a small source of income, but real money made from lessons and total concern for the golfer's welfare and enjoyment from the game is derived from the sales "beholden" members make in the pro shop.

Teaching effectively is not only a lot of hard work, but is time consuming. I have worked with many fine young assistants who wanted to be golf professionals. I advised them their, job security, income, and reputation would be dependent on their ability to teach all golfers.

I do know that Dr. Gary Wiren and Joe O'Brien of the PGA headquarters staff are aware of the need to project the golf professional in the areas Mac Hunter brought out.

I never gave much thought to outside competition in the sales of merchandise because of these reasons:

- 1) I was always available to my members when they needed my help.
- 2) I was always visible, or tried to be most of the time.
- 3) I was approachable, and between myself and my staff, there was always a concern for the golfer's game.
- 4) We applied sincerity during and well after a lesson or club sale.

I sold most of my merchandise by selling myself and my services. On most Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, I served as a starter. Why? This gave me an opportunity to see and visit with each of my members. Golfers like to see and visit with the man. A few tips and kind words made me not only friends, but sales as well. At least 85 percent of my active time in golf has been teaching and visiting with my golfers.

The one simple fact that every golf professional must face is: his game is secondary to those he serves. Yet, he must play a respectable game. This is easy and can be done in one's spare time.

Gene O'Brien
PGA Pro
Wichita, Kan.

Negative on numbers

I found Richard Newell's golf car article (Nov./Dec. GB) very interesting and informative and his points are well taken. One minor

flaw might arise in the hourly wage he pays his cart man. In the Profit Analysis, under expenses — cartmen wages, I doubt very seriously if the wage of \$3.50 will remain applicable in the next 4 years. Perhaps a cost-of-living increase based on the average increase of the minimum wage over the past 3 years might yield a little more accurate figure over the 4-year projection of cartmen wages.

Dick Horton
Executive Director
Tennessee Section PGA
Nashville

Collision course on cars

The article by Devereux Josephs, Jr., in the November/December issue of GOLF BUSINESS is the perfect recipe for "killing the Golden Goose."

Rental of golf cars is one of the largest single sources of income for golf courses, but if rental prices continue to spiral to keep up with rising costs of the car, this major source of income could start to dry up.

The National Golf Foundation states more than 446,000 golf cars are currently in service with higher projections for the next 3 years, but where is the breaking point?

Mr. Josephs writes "cheaper golf cars aren't going to be around much longer," intimates low golf car prices are gone forever, suggests a number of firms that lead the vanguard in low pricing have closed their doors, and uses \$1,700 as an average selling price in the article's net profit computations with a statement "luckily, the initial price isn't critical."

However, on his example of 45 golf cars, our pricing against his pricing can make a difference of \$13,500 and in Richard Newell's article (same issue) the purchasing difference could amount to \$30,000 in his 100-car example. This is critical. The higher interest and insurance on this \$30,000 differential is equally critical.

In the first place, if Mr. Josephs wants to use \$1,700 "as a high and average retail price" why is his firm's golf car listed at \$2,136 in your 1977 Golf Car Guide published in the same issue?

Mr. Josephs makes reference to the \$1,-300 golf car as the "cheapest," when he should refer to it as the "least expensive." We all know a cheap product can be very expensive, but that it doesn't necessarily follow that a quality product has to be expensive.

Since Bogue demonstrates the lowest 4-wheel pricing in the 1977 Golf Car Guide (made in the U.S. as well) it is obvious Mr. Josephs is trying to qualify our product as the "cheapest." We admit to being the least expensive, but far from the cheapest. We don't

believe it is necessary to gouge the customer in order to make a profit.

While Mr. Josephs is trying to encourage courses to increase their rental fees to \$12 to absorb higher car prices, perhaps it is time golf courses encourage Mr. Josephs to either reduce or hold the line on golf car prices to enable golf car rentals to continue at present rental rates.

Robert L. Balfour
Vice President, Marketing and Sales
Electric Vehicle Division
Bogue Electric Manufacturing Co.
Augusta, Ga.

40 percent can still be found

Being an independent golf sales representative in the Texas-Louisiana area, I was interested in the comments of AMF Ben Hogan's Ray Coleman (Take Advantage of the Salesman Who Call on Your Pro Shop, Jan. GB).

I disagree with Coleman's contention that "Most salesmen realize the days of the 40 percent markup is over." Legitimate profit margins are being realized in most of the golf shops I call on with the exception of hard goods lines and, possibly, golf bags.

Many manufacturers will be looking with dismay upon the shrinkage of hardgoods inventories in the golf shop due to the difficulty of maintaining a satisfactory margin of profit. This may hasten an effort toward a solution because the golf shop still remains the best avenue for marketing top-quality golf equipment due to the advice and expertise of the golf professional in this field.

Softgoods manufacturers are benefiting temporarily from the professional's hardgoods dilemma as he seeks to restore sales volume elsewhere within the golf shop. He is limited as to how far he can go in that direction due to space limitations and difficulty in moving sale merchandise to a fairly static clientele. My feeling is that all manufacturers to whom the golf shop is important must become more conscious of his profit welfare, and that includes the salesmen who represent them.

Bill Barnum
Bellare, Tex.

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