

Going Postal

WE'VE GOT MAIL

Shack Attack

(Editor's note: The following letters are in response to Geoff Shackelford's May/June *Golf By Design* column, which was headlined "Dumb and Dumber: Superintendent Style." Shackelford's response follows the letters.)

Your article by Geoff Shackelford is a joke. He ought to try and do a superintendent's job for one day.

Name withheld

Via e-mail

How can anyone without a background in turf management be so outspoken. This idiot doesn't have a clue on what it takes to run a quality high-end golf maintenance facility. Why would superintendents want the greens so fast and cut so low to where it makes our job harder?

Maintaining fast greens is not easy, nor something I want to do all the time. The reason we do is because the members and guests want a course that looks like Augusta and plays like the U.S. Open.

The public makes the demands and we just do what they want.

Chris Norton
Superintendent
China

After reading your article, "Dumb and Dumber," you can save a tree and stop sending me your magazine. All I will do is throw it in the trash. Maybe Shackelford should get his head out of his (expletive) and spend a day or two with a superintendent to see what work is all about.

If anything, I and most of my fellow superintendents water to the correct depth to encourage deep root growth. Maybe if idiots like Mr. Shackelford didn't drive their carts so close to the green we could get some infiltration in those areas and they wouldn't seem so wet.

As far as "cart path only," again if golfers would use their heads when they are on the golf course, there would seldom be a need for this rule. But sit on the second tee of your local golf course after a rainstorm when it is cart path only, and how many carts go off the path as soon as they are out of range of the

clubhouse. Or how many carts will drive right through standing water in the middle of a fairway.

I and many of my fellow superintendents play the course as often as we can. I'm single and can play four to five times a week, but after a 12 to 14 hour day some superintendents would rather be with their wife and kids. Imagine that!

Most superintendents don't obsess about greens speeds. Green committee chairmen do! Maybe we do make changes with architects but maybe more architects should consult with more superintendents before designing their maintenance nightmare courses.

If you want smooth healthy greens there are some things that have to be done: aerification, verticutting, topdressing, etc.

Tell your wife about not putting flower beds on the golf course and understand that golf is more than putting the ball in the hole. It is also about a beautiful walk through nature.

We would probably write more notes in the pro shop and locker room but most members don't read the notes we put there now. We don't ignore constructive criticism, we follow our set management structure.

Most superintendents at private clubs report to the green committee and or board, not every single golfer on the course. If the members would follow the proper chain of command and talk to their chairman or president first there would be a lot less miscommunication.

And did I mention Mr. Shackelford, that you are an idiot!

Timothy L. Pratt
CGCS
Florida



I applaud you. Change nothing about your magazine to suit individuals who don't know what the word laugh means. I have been in the GCSAA forums since they started and have been amazed that so many of these people don't know how to laugh. Your article hit home, and I laughed my butt off.

Gary Chaney
Superintendent
Florida

(Shack Talks Back: While it is interesting that the humor in "Dumb" was not as well-received as it was in my earlier essay on green committees [January/February], I'm pleased that it has opened some eyes to an issue worthy of further discussion and debate: the opinions of customers.)

It seems odd to suggest that any golfer with an opinion is an "idiot." Why? Because, fair or not, this is a customer-service industry. To dismiss customers and not search for creative ways to educate them — no matter how ridiculous some of their [or my] ideas may be — is a risky path for the industry to follow.)

Bring Back Hacks

I enjoyed your "Hack" article (Money Shot column, May/June), and I agree with you totally. We have just started to push "New Exposures to Golf." Four holes, six holes, eight holes, 11 holes ... whatever you can deliver designed for any type of development where land is at a premium or there's not enough available for a regulation nine. Lots of interest and two takers.

Ed Seay
Executive VP/Chief Operating Officer
Palmer Course Design Co.
Florida

Let's Go Surfin' Now

I just read the article by Joel Jackson — "A Computer Is A Terrible Thing To Waste" (Shades of Green column, May/June) — and he's right on track for all of us in this industry. We need to learn to use the Internet as a tool and not just react to it. We created our Web site this past winter (www.krigger.com) as a start.

Also, the point he made that caught my attention is that the new millennium doesn't start until 2001. I've argued that

point for years but the world seems determined to count 1/1/00 as the start of the new millennium. It must be new math for the end of the 20th century.

Tim Fitzgerald
President, Krigger & Company
Pennsylvania

Ego Boosters

I just wanted to say that I enjoy reading your magazine and I also like the new Web site. Very interesting and informative articles.

Barry Bollinger
Pennsylvania

Thanks for creating a very informative magazine that's not afraid to tackle tough questions.

Mike Salvio
Virginia

I just wanted to drop you a note and let you know that I really enjoy your magazine. I look forward to receiving it every month. Keep up the good work.

John Holmes
World Golf Construction
Florida

I have to say I have enjoyed the change of pace your publication gives to the industry. It's a welcome change from the boring bull I get from some of the other magazines I get across my desk.

For some of us, you knuckleheads are getting it right! I even got a fax of one of your articles from (someone) last week who I thought was a full-on squarehead, but if he's reading *Golfdom* I have to give him some credit.

I enjoy the information, and the more down-to-earth way of communicating it. If you clowns need some help with anything please let me know and I will help with any info I can.

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Feel like going postal? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Pat Jones at patrick.jones@advanstar.com, fax to 440/891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.