

'CGCS' Implies Something That Doesn't Always Deliver

I was introduced in my last column as a certified superintendent, which I'm not. I'm a former CGCS who was certified for 10 years from 1981 to 1991. My certification lapsed in 1992 when, because of an illness, I failed to obtain enough continuing education units (CEUs) to meet the re-certification requirement. I could have appealed to the GCSAA Board, but I asked myself: Do I really need to do that?

I realized I'd been, to some extent, taking seminars only to acquire CEUs so I could remain certified. Why should my employer pay for my time in my absence and my fees for travel, hotel and rental car if the seminar I'm attending isn't of direct and immediate relevance to my current position? What benefits does certification bring to the current employer of a competent superintendent?

Due to the nature of my job at that time, I hired and fired many superintendents. I also learned that the title, CGCS, doesn't provide an employer any certainty that the individual with the title can grow grass or manage a golf course maintenance operation.

The CGCS title is *not* intended to eliminate a potential employer's duty to fully review any candidate. Any potential employer would be negligent if it didn't thoroughly check all references that a job candidate provides.

There are certified superintendents with 10 jobs in 20 years that were not all climbing-the-ladder positions. There's a reason for that.

There are certified superintendents who are successful in their current jobs, but want to make the jump to courses that offer the big bucks. Despite all the GCSAA seminars they've taken, some will find they don't have a clue how to



master their new challenges other than by throwing money at them.

Most certified superintendents are among the better superintendents in their areas, but some are no better than someone available for \$30,000 or less.

In the employer's view, CGCS should stand for someone who can effectively and efficiently produce exceptional greens and an outstanding golf course daily — especially under stress, and most especially when others in similar circumstances can't do the job. Any employer would be happy to pay a premium price to be assured of a premium performance in crunch time. But why pay a premium for a certified superintendent if this isn't implicitly guaranteed?

This is the 800-pound gorilla that certification must pin before CGCS represents something other than the willingness to take yearly classes and

tests on somebody else's nickel.

The bottom line: CGCS implies something that it doesn't always deliver — and that's a long-term problem for GCSAA. Do other professional societies or associations have this problem? Have you ever read in the newspaper about a lawyer or a doctor who messed up? Such aberrations make the news because they are at least thought to be aberrations. Certified superintendents who get the ax don't make the trade publications often because it happens all the time.

Editor's Note: Mike Heacock, former vice president of agronomy and maintenance for American Golf Corp., fields your questions in his bi-monthly column. If you have a question, fire away. You can reach Heacock at: mike.heacock@verizon.net or 310-849-5011.

Equal Treatment?

For an organization that once derided Ben Wright for commenting on female anatomy in his golf commentary, the LPGA should examine its own media guide for clues to why he would make such comments.

As we thumbed through our LPGA 2001 Media Guide, we were shocked to see the types of items listed in the personal section: height, hair and eye colors, and hobbies, among other items that had little relevance to the player's golfing ability.

It took us a minute to figure out that we weren't reading some cheesy "Personals" ads in our local newspaper or the sidebar to a Playboy centerfold. Perhaps the LPGA should consider revising its own treatment of its players before accusing others of not taking them seriously.

— Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor