

Going Postal

■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

About That Southern Hills Work Crew ...

I read with interest — and some concern — Larry Aylward's fea-



BILL WELCH

John Szklinski: *Sports Illustrated* called him a "taskmaster."

ture article on superintendent John Szklinski and Southern Hills CC ("Labor of Love," June).

Having worked with former Southern Hills superintendent Bob Randquist and the maintenance staff at Southern Hills during the design and construction of the club's alternate nine-hole course, I was disappointed to read comments made in the article alluding to the maintenance crew's lack of a work ethic. The article also seemed to infer that this lack of work ethic was a residual from Randquist's tenure as superintendent.

From working with Randquist and his crew and having admired his talents over the years, I have a different perspective. It is my opinion that he is at the forefront of his profession. With regard to agronomics, personal professionalism and staff preparation, I consider Randquist to have no superior. I wish the article could have focused solely on John Szklinski's talents and his perseverance in the face of many challenges.

**Bill Coore, Golf Course Architect
Coore and Crenshaw
Scottsdale, Ariz.**

Aylward responds: *One of the toughest challenges John Szklinski endured at Southern Hills was the loss of staff, and I would have been blind not to report it. The*

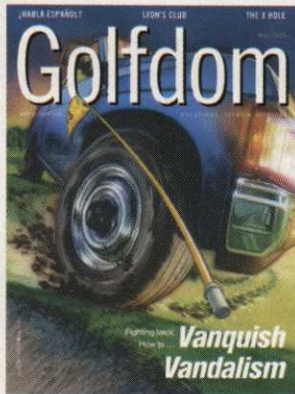
reason so many employees quit the demanding Szklinski's staff was because they didn't get along with him or agree with his ways. I was only reporting what Szklinski said about his staff.

The story was not intended to make Bob Randquist look like a poor superintendent. Randquist left Southern Hills because it was time to move on. Management hired Szklinski because they liked his work ethic and enthusiasm. This kind of thing goes on every day in every profession.

Szklinski acknowledges that he does things differently than Randquist, but he has the utmost respect for him. "He's an institution in this industry," Szklinski says.

Fighting Back

Having dealt with vandalism over the last 22 years, I've seen it all. I agree with the article ("Van-



quish Vandalism," May) that one of the best preventative methods is hiring students and teachers to work on the course.

The students and teachers I've hired take such pride in the course that they exert peer pressure on their classmates who might vandalize the course. In addition, on the rare occasions when vandalism occurs, the perpetrators usually can't keep their mouths shut and word quickly gets around school. Then the good guys (those students and teachers who work for me) take over to let us know who the vandals are.

I hired the high school athletic

director 15 years ago, and he's been with me ever since. His involvement has led me to hire other great teachers and students from the school, many of whom come back season after season.

**Jerry Coldiron, CGCS
Boone Links/Lassing Pointe
Florence, Ky.**

Where Is GCSAA Taking Us?

You did an excellent job on your editorial about GCSAA's e-commerce initiative (Flagstick, June). Your commentary on GCSAA's e-commerce initiative was articulate, to the point and relevant to today's political agenda. Let's hope the GCSAA reads and understands what you are saying and doesn't put on its blinders because its money-making idea is being pooh-poohed.

Where is the political arm of the GCSAA taking us — and to what end?

**John K. MacKenzie Jr., CGCS
North Oaks GC
North Oaks, Minn.**

I enjoyed your views on the e-commerce pilot program by the GCSAA. You are correct: Distributors do bring value to superintendents. E-commerce has a place in the market, but it will not replace relationships that have been developed for years.

When disease breaks out or irrigation/maintenance equipment needs immediate attention, the relationships between customers and distributors become crucial.

**Jeff L. Mobley
T&O Marketing Manager
ProSource One
Memphis, Tenn.**

Editor's Update: See this month's Flagstick for an update on GCSAA's e-commerce initiative.

Image Isn't Everything

Thank you for your commentary [Pin High, June] on GCSAA's

image campaign. It's important for the GCSAA to pursue its image campaign, but let's keep this in perspective.

First, superintendents maintain golf courses so that people can play a game. This is a simple concept. GCSAA President Tommy Witt's contention — "If there weren't educated superintendents to groom golf courses, the game wouldn't be this popular" — is indicative of an arrogance that is overwhelming this profession. We enhance the game, but to infer that we are responsible for golf's popularity is an extravagant exaggeration.

Secondly, Witt's denigration of other professions is uncalled for. After all, window washers and janitors pay my salary.

Lastly, the ads that you mentioned portrayed the stereotypical "greenkeeper" with tongue-in-cheek. They are parodies, plain and simple.

**John S. Cooper, Superintendent
Atwood Homestead GC
Rockford, Ill.**

He Likes Mike

I'm pleased to see Michael R. Heacock join *Golfdom's* editorial staff [Been There, Seen That, June].

I had the pleasure of serving nearly 10 years alongside Heacock at American Golf Corp., and I have benefited many times from his wise consultation.

He is a premier practitioner and a truly great mind in turfgrass and golf facility management.

**Bill Johnson, CGCS
Field Sales Engineer
Firestone Building Products Co.
Carmel, Ind.**

Feel like going postal? We'd like to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@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.