

# for PDI

## It will segregate the association

BY SCOTT D. HILES

**A**fter reading and discussing many points about the Professional Development Initiative, I can't figure out how segregating the membership and mandating ongoing compliance will benefit the future of the association. I disagree with many of PDI's purposes, and here's why:

*We're told the PDI is to ensure that new superintendents have adequate education.*

**False.** Employers demand certain educational requirements, and they control the marketplace — not a trade association. I've never been asked in an interview what associations I belong to or if I'm complying with the membership requirements. Employers want to know my educational background and experiences. Employers also want a product, and I must supply it. If I am unable to supply it, they will find someone else who can, regardless of a trade association.

*We are told that by meeting the PDI and its requirements, the association can then market its members as educated and up to date.*

**False.** Do you mean to tell me that the association is unable to currently market us as educated? We are the most educated employees in the golf business. We have the most diverse set of competencies in the industry. As it stands, the association can easily promote what we do and who we are.

*Those not able or willing to attend mandatory educational programs will not be penalized.*

**False.** A demotion in classification amongst peers shows unwillingness,

incompetence or other less-desirable qualities. Next to my name and classification there is no room for: "already highly educated; 10 years of superintendent experience; Audubon compliant; really wanted to attend required educational venues, but budgetary cutbacks and family issues made this impossible." It just says, "general superintendent member or less than an A."

*The association will promote the general superintendent member as much as the Class A member.*

**False.** If this is so, why is a classification even necessary? My association should view me as a fellow superintendent and an equal — not an A, B or Z member.

We each have specific talents, needs and guidelines as diverse as our courses. There's the nine-hole superintendent with a low budget, who's also the mechanic and irrigation tech, among other things.

He's no less a qualified superintendent than an executive superintendent who hasn't jumped in a trench in years.

The low-end superintendent who works miracles with no money and poor equipment may not be able to attend conferences and other set criteria offered by the association. Are you going to tell me that these superintendents do not deserve to be categorized as Class A superintendents?

Some have the resources to attend conferences and seminars; others don't. Where does the association get off telling any of them that they are worth less because they can't?

*The mandatory educational requirements will*  
*Continued on page 50*



**"My association should view me as a fellow superintendent and an equal — not an A, B or Z member."**

**—SCOTT HILES**

# Nay



## Last Call for PDI

### Yea

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proposal. The entire GCSAA education system has been greatly enhanced. The awarding of points for CGCS will be refined to mirror the PDI. This will make CGCS more affordable and easier to track.

**“The entire GCSAA education system has been greatly enhanced.”**

**- DAVID DOWNING**

listened to members' ideas to find those solutions. But it's up to individual members to decide for themselves what they want to do.

One should also remember that PDI is still a volun-

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GCSAA, which is a member-driven organization, has listened to its members and worked to find an equitable proposal so the entire membership can benefit. It listened to members' concerns about pay scales, security and marketing and worked to find solutions to these concerns. The association also

### Nay

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*show class A members as highly educated and up to date.*

**False.** The initiative has been rewritten and grants credit for meeting attendance. It will also grant credit for community service. Wasn't the original intent to force educational requirements? Now it is reduced to this — just to get PDI passed?

This watered-down attempt at an educational opportunity will counteract what the PDI is to promote. To go with the PDI as written would be a mockery of the association.

Yes, there are plenty of gains to be embraced from attending a meeting, conference or trade show. The discussions, camaraderie and idea sharing are great things. We do it freely now. To give educational credit for this is far-fetched.

*The association can attract new members by the competencies laid out in the PDI.*

**False.** The association is doing nothing other than segregating its membership and making it less desirable for newcomers to join. The newcomer wants to be treated

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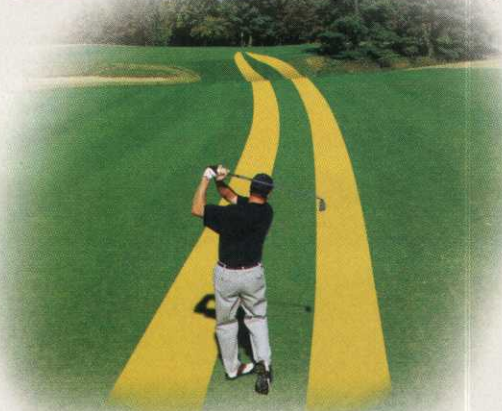
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## Last Call for PDI

### Yea

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tary program. If one elects not to meet the new requirements of Class A membership, that person will be a general superintendent member. The person will still have access to all the benefits he or she now has as a GCSAA member, including education, career development and information services.

GCSAA is not Big Brother working against you. It is you and I working together to enhance our place in golf. It's time to stop telling ourselves how wonderful we are. It is time to take our story to the rest of the golfing world and secure our position as a major force in the sport.

I support PDI because it can help us achieve these goals. Is it the only answer? No. Will it solve every problem? No. Just as we use varied techniques and tools to be successful at our own facility, PDI is part of a program to achieve the goals it was intended to — security, value and marketing.

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*Downing is director of golf course operations at Barefoot Resort & GC in North Myrtle Beach, S.C.*

### Nay

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as an equal, not a "less-than." What gives the association the right to tell a new member that he or she must meet its expectations?

The association must meet the expectations of a potential member. The new member pays for services that the association provides. The association must attract new members by being able to help them succeed and by offering beneficial services, rather than demanding compliance.

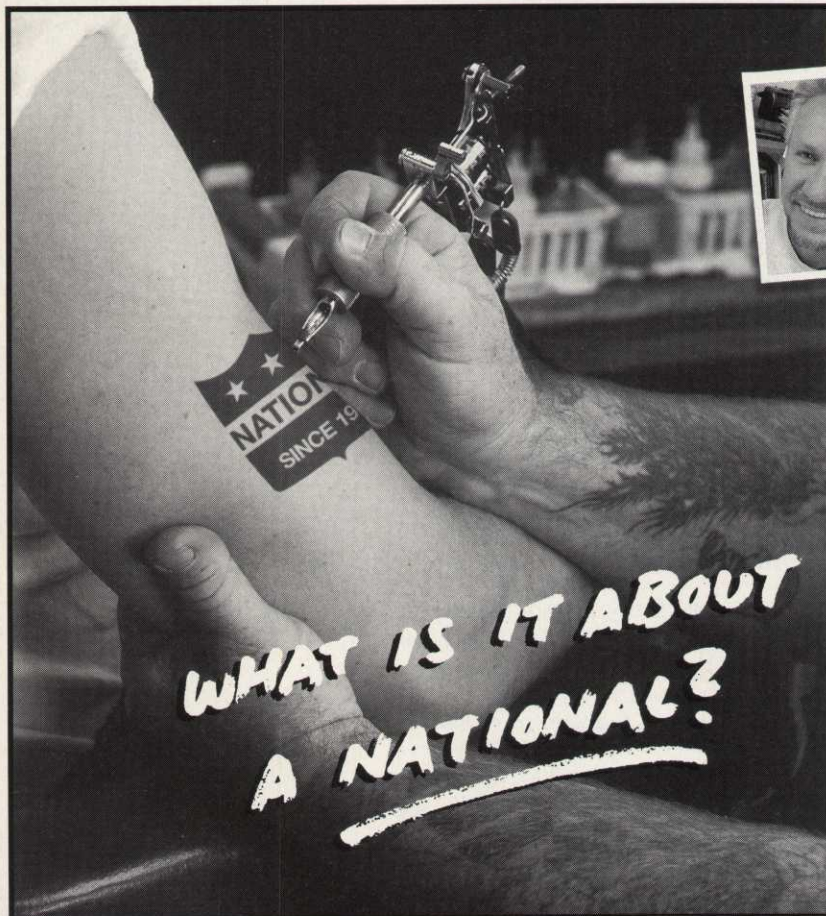
Thank you for the PDR (formerly the HR web) as a voluntary tool to better understand our strengths and weaknesses. This is what the association should be about, and it's a benefit of membership. It's about providing *for*, not demanding *of*.

We need to promote the association by what we do *for* each other, *for* golf and *for* the environment.

Do not implement a program of segregation like the PDI. Do what is right for the membership, not what is right for the association. They are not the same.

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*Hiles, a superintendent and consultant in eastern Canada, is an active board member for various turfgrass associations.*



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