

Meeet the new boss . . . same as the old boss. I mean that in a good way, though. Next month, Mike Wallace, certified superintendent of Hop Meadow CC in Simsbury, Conn., takes over as GCSAA president. Wallace succeeds Tommy Witt, certified superintendent of Kiawah Island Club in Kiawah Island, S.C.

Wallace says GCSAA will get a guy who's nothin' fancy. Like Witt, Wallace just wants to do the right thing and be there for members. "There's nothing that's going to be big and flashy because Mike Wallace isn't a big and flashy guy," Wallace says.

Surely, Witt didn't present himself as big and flashy. He seemed genuinely interested in *all* superintendents' concerns, and that's not easy. When's the last time a leader of an organization from any field tried to satisfy everyone's interests?

Take the Professional Development Initiative, for instance. Witt began his tenure last February when the disputed PDI — GCSAA's program to upgrade standards for superintendents to make them more competent and marketable — was voted in by superintendents. But the controversy surrounding PDI, which created a great debate among superintendents, didn't end after it passed. It's still an issue, especially since it doesn't take effect until July 2003.

When PDI became a topic of discussion on the GCSAA Web site's Talking It Over forum, Witt was there to chat — and he didn't take a hardline approach. Last February, shortly after the GCSAA show, a superintendent posted a message about his concern over losing his Class A status because PDI requirements meant he would miss more work and spend more of the course's money to attend seminars. (Under PDI, Class A superintendents are subject to meet ongoing requirements to keep their status.)

It took Witt less than four hours to respond to the superintendent's post. Witt offered guidance about the alternative ways to achieve the required education so the superintendent wouldn't have to miss much work or spend much money. Witt didn't come across as a

Wallace Picks Up Where Witt Left Off

BY LARRY AYLWARD



"THERE'S NOTHING THAT'S GOING TO BE BIG AND FLASHY BECAUSE MIKE WALLACE ISN'T A BIG AND FLASHY GUY," THE NEW PRESIDENT SAYS

company man — he came across as a concerned peer. That's exactly what Wallace wants to be.

Wallace, who was appointed to GCSAA's board of directors in 1995, realizes that PDI will continue to be an issue under his leadership. Like Witt, he's not about to tell troubled superintendents to get over it.

"[PDI] is a change, and there's always going to be concern with change," Wallace says. "It's a normal human reaction."

Under his jurisdiction, Wallace vows to keep PDI moving toward its implementation date — and to make sure it can be beneficial to as many superintendents as possible.

"We want to have a seamless transition in 2003," Wallace says. "To do that, we must get PDI's infrastructure in place."

"We are the proverbial duck on the pond," Wallace continues. "The top is moving steadily ahead, but our legs are paddling like the dickens to get everything in its proper place."

Wallace is aware of superintendents' concerns of having to travel and miss work to obtain points to retain their Class A status. He says it's GCSAA's goal to be "more accessible and affordable" in education.

"We're in the process of evaluating all the educational opportunities," Wallace says. "Superintendents will find they can satisfy their educational needs without doing a lot of traveling."

Wallace takes over the GCSAA presidency at a difficult time. The economy is hurting, and the golf industry has felt the financial pinch.

"The economy is a concern as we go forward," Wallace says. "We will look at all of our programs and evaluate them."

"The golf industry is going to be challenged," he adds. "We're not going to climb out of this recession within the next few months."

Continued on page 20

Pin High

Continued from page 18

We're in for a tough haul, and we have to recognize that."

Wallace says he'll do his part by spending the association's money frugally. If he decides a speaking engagement on the West Coast doesn't warrant the expenditure for him to go, he'll try to find someone closer to the location to cover for him. "I'm looking for a return on investment for the association and myself," Wallace states.

Ironically, Wallace is yet another GCSAA president who will seek a new job shortly after stepping into the presidency. The last was 2000 GCSAA president Scott Woodhead, who left his job during his tenure. Wallace will leave Hop Meadow on March 31 because he was told his contract would not be renewed. If he can't find another job within six months, he'll have to resign as GCSAA president.

It may look strange to outsiders,



"THE INDUSTRY IS GOING TO BE CHALLENGED. WE'RE NOT GOING TO CLIMB OUT OF THIS RECESSION WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS."

Mike Wallace, incoming GCSAA president

but Wallace says the number of GCSAA presidents who have lost their jobs is no big deal.

"Coincidences happen," says Wallace, who has been at Hop Meadow since 1985. "Look at the statistics. Most superintendents move on every five years."

Wallace says the split from Hop Meadow is amicable, but he admits his contract was not renewed because a small group of golfers didn't agree with his management style. Wallace acts like he knew it was coming.

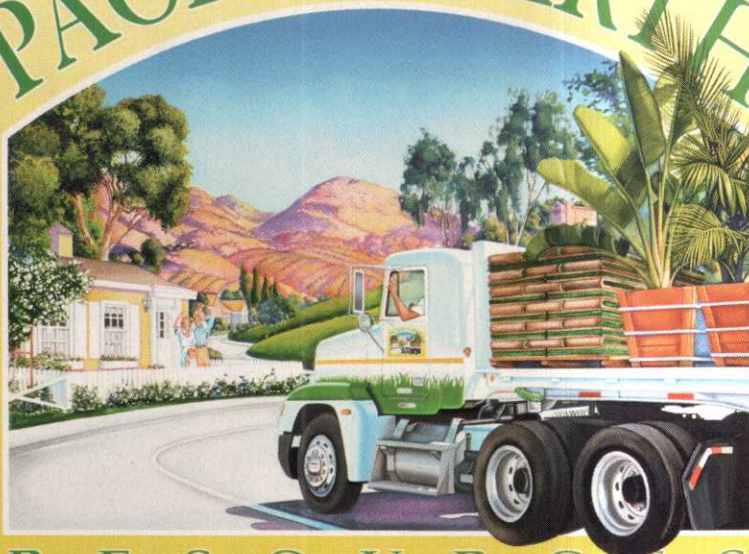
"I'm looking for work," Wallace says. "I have my résumés out."

What will a golf course get in Wallace? A modest man, for one thing.

"I get up in the morning, tie my shoelaces like anyone else and go to work to do the best job I can with the knowledge I have," Wallace says. "And I'm always looking to gain more knowledge."

Golfdom Editor Larry Aylward can be reached at 440-891-2770 or laylward@advanstar.com.

PACIFIC EARTH



R E S O U R C E S



Pacific
Earth Resources

Pacific Sod

Pacific Arbor
Nurseries

Growers of Pacific Sod

Featuring

Medallion Plus™

A beautiful blend of
fescue plus bluegrass

GN-1™ Hybrid Bermuda

GN-1 turf was used on 4
of the top 5 playing
fields as voted by the
National Football League
Players Association.

(800)942-5296

PacificEarth.com