

Gertrude Stein once said, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." Shakespeare wrote, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." This column isn't about roses, of course, but it's about an issue just as thorny: a possible name change for the GCSAA.

The name of the association has changed four times already: National Association of Greenkeepers of America (1926); Greenkeeping Superintendents of America (1938); National Greenkeeping Superintendents Association (1948); and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (1951).

The last change in 1951 was about the time Arnie started hitching up his pants and golf took on a new persona. We now have a TV channel devoted 24-7 to golf. When you consider the variety of individual job titles floating around the industry and the international nature of the membership, it's understandable that there's interest in finding a new name for the association to capture that diversity better than Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

I think the name change is up for debate again since we are in the midst of several changes in the association, including PDI requirements, the creation of the Environmental Institute for Golf, a new governance structure, relocation and next year's Golf Industry Show.

There's a river of change and an ocean of opportunity to be navigated, and visionaries want to be sure that "superintendent" is the right name for the future. If not, what alternatives make sense?

For the sake of discussion, two possible names have risen to the top of the list, Golf Course Management Association and Golf Course Managers Association. In both cases, the "of America" has been dropped because the international reach of the organization.

The Messaging and Branding Task Group under the Strategic Communications Committee will take the issue of a name change on the road and seek input and feedback. Nothing would see the light of day until at least 2006 after lots of debate.

Name Game Heats Up Again

BY JOEL JACKSON



IT'S TIME WE HAD A
CONVERSATION
ABOUT POSSIBLY
CHANGING WHAT
WE CALL
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Let's face it: GCSAA is a mouthful to say in polite conversation and usually requires an explanation. So does the title and job description of a superintendent.

However, a 1999 survey conducted by GCSAA found a majority of member superintendents were happy to leave well enough alone, mainly because there is little agreement on what the best replacement name might be. GCSAA has been doing a pretty good job of getting recognition in the golf world, and many people feel a name change would cause more confusion than it would be worth.

What about all the local chapter names? Would they also have to change? That's why we're talking about all this now. It will take a two-thirds member majority vote to decide the issue, so don't get all riled up. Just talk about it.

I think the term "manager" or "management" are more professional and descriptive of what a "superintendent" does overall, and are easier to identify by golfers and the public. But I see possible confusion with regard to the role of club manager or general manager.

The demographics of golf courses and the turf professionals who manage the operations and facilities are so varied that finding an all-inclusive name is a tough assignment.

Maybe having this conversation isn't such a bad idea after all. Either we come up with a name that fits the diverse role of all those who oversee the most important asset at a golf course, or we strongly endorse the name superintendent and just move on with life.

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