

# We've Got Mail

■ LETTERS FROM THE FIELD

## It's 5 a.m. Where Is Your Golf Pro?

I was quite amused by the article "What's in Store (and What's Not in Store) 10 Years Down the Road" by Craig F. Zellers (January, page 21).

However, there was one comment I found to be untrue and a perfect example as to one of the problems that has always faced the golf industry. Zellers states that one of the things you won't see is "a golf pro showing up at 5:30 a.m. to go out with the crew to see what changing a cup is all about."

First of all, I am a golf pro. And I have changed cups, but it was not at 5:30 a.m.; it was 5 a.m. — so I could return to the shop to greet the guests in our tournament and work all day making rulings, doing scores, loading golf cars, shaking hands, putting ice out, managing the range, etc., etc., etc. And on the same day I left at 10 p.m. after doing scoring and pairings for the next day. Meanwhile, the superintendent was home by 2:30 p.m. because he had nothing to do while the tournament was going on. And I was again there at 5 a.m. to do it all over again. That was not the first time I changed cups, nor will it be the last.

The statement by Zeller is a prime example of Golf Pro vs. Superintendent, and a publication such as *Golfdom* should strive to have parties both work together to provide the best product for the golfer. Otherwise, how about, "A superintendent who will not have an excuse when the club chair wants an answer about anything that is wrong."

Or, "A sales rep who doesn't promise the world but delivers a small town in West Virginia."

**Mike Fields**

**Director of Golf, PGA Pro  
Kearney Hill Golf Links, Lexington, Ky.**

Does Craig Zellers think that golf professionals don't read *Golfdom*? Or that PGA professionals don't read *Golfdom*? And if he does think that we read the magazine, why would he suggest such a preposterous thing like, "A golf pro would not be likely to show up at 5:30 and go out with the grounds crew to change cups."

I cannot say that I get up at 5 in the morning to go out with the crew at my club, but I do go out on the golf course with them as often as possible, as does our director of golf, to learn some of the many things that they have to teach about agronomy (probably didn't think I knew that word), horticulture and overall golf course maintenance. We, the PGA Professionals, respect our superintendents and their crews, to the highest degree. I'm not sure what Zellers was suggesting, but I took exception to the fact that he thinks we don't care. Anytime my superintendent invites me on the golf course, I jump at the chance to learn.

**Tony J. Gill, Head Golf Professional  
The Quarry At La Quinta (Calif.)**

## Big Brother = Bigger Misconception

Maybe I'm just accustomed to upbeat articles in the opening pages of *Golfdom* that promote the high professional standards and work ethic of superintendents, but I must take issue with your Pin High column ("Welcome to the Show — and 1984," January, page 10). The tone of your commentary is that for years superintendents have been sneaking around during conferences and not attending the trade show and educational sessions. This is just not true. The numbers of superintendents walking the show floor and sitting in educational sessions are the facts.

In the past I had a club president attend the Golf Course Su-

perintendents Association of America show several times as an exhibitor. He came away impressed with the hard work and attention superintendents

showed during the show. He attended numerous other trade shows through the years and commented that nothing compared.

Conversely, boys will be boys and some superintendents and maybe even an owner or two may cut a class to take in what the area has to offer, be it golf or gators. But they will be in a vast minority. Many will head down a couple of days early or hang around a day or two after for a little time away from the frozen tundra. Isn't that why the Golf Industry Show (GIS) has fallen into a rotation of attractive weather sites and won't be held in Cleveland?

Golf course owners (even before the National Golf Course Owners Association), club officials and maybe even a few Club Managers Association of America members have been attending the superintendents' show for years. Whether they attend the GIS or not, they need not be concerned with what's going on as your commentary may lead them to believe.

**Rod Johnson, Certified Superintendent  
Pine Hills Country Club  
Sheboygan, Wis.**

*Editor's response: Hey Rod, I didn't mean to insinuate that ALL superintendents are sneaking around. Believe me, I know they're walking the floors and attending educational sessions. My point in the column had more to do with proper communication between superintendents and owners than anything. But I do have a bone to pick with you. Why couldn't Cleveland host the Golf Industry Show?*



*It's beautiful here in February. Just bring your parka.*

## Ban the Book?

The article "The Book on Bunkers" by Jon Scott (No-

vember 2004, page 72) is significantly contrary to the article "Bunkers: Hazards or Havens," by Robert Vavrek, in the March 2004 USGA Green Section Record.

Personally, I prefer the USGA approach. I really prefer it. The PGA article says four things that bothered me enough to take this time:

■ "It could be argued that bunker maintenance should be as important as greens." If the goal is to make golf even more expensive, that's a good idea.

■ "Players who hit their ball in bunkers should have a reasonable opportunity to make par." Yikes. Did he not watch the PGA Championship from Whistling Straits or the U.S. Open at Shinnecock? A reasonable chance for par from ANY and ALL bunkers? I'm hiding this article.

■ "If bunkers are supposed to be more of a penalty to an errant shot, why not use water?" Maybe it's tough to put water on the side of a hill is one "why not?"

■ He says that the "reason bunkers fail to perform (whatever perform means) is because of poor maintenance." Where are my nitroglycerin pills?

How about in the name of fair play, you print the Vavrek article as a rebuttal? I circulated it to my membership, and it was well-received.

**Walt Gooder, Superintendent  
Country Hills Golf Club  
Calgary, Canada**

**We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Thomas Skernivitz at [tskernivitz@advanstar.com](mailto:tskernivitz@advanstar.com).**