

# We've Got Mail

■ LETTERS FROM THE FIELD



## Readers Make Own Points About "Point/Counterpoint"

I read your interesting article – "Point/Counterpoint: Superintendents Square Off Over the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America's GCSAA's Certification Program" – in the July edition of *Golfdom*. While I find substance in the thinking of both Christopher S. Gray Sr. and Rafael Barajas, I'm more in agreement with Gray. Certification can certainly provide an ego boost and, perhaps, somewhere along the way a career boost, although I have a problem believing the latter. I, too, was a certified superintendent at one time, but I never found one person that received an increase in salary or obtained a position because he or she was certified.

**Gale L. Love**  
Grass Valley, Calif.

Bravo! Great job. I agree with Christopher S. Gray and his points 1,000 percent. Letters after your name and a spray rig full of continuing education units don't make a superintendent. Thanks for your honesty and stating how the majority feels.

**Steve Good**  
Superintendent, Oakmont Golf Club  
Santa Rose, Calif.

You have to be getting a lot of feedback from your "Point/Counterpoint" feature. I don't get

worked up over industry issues such as this, but I guess this story struck a chord. I couldn't agree more with the point Christopher S. Gray Sr. made. I've been a superintendent for 20 years and an 11-year GCSAA member. I worked private golf for 10 years and public golf for 10 years. I've busted my butt for my golfers, my members, greens committees, boards of directors, private owners and myself. I know I'm good at what I do, and I don't care who else recognizes it.

My Class-A status was lost because I didn't have time to attend meetings or the budget to go to the "Show." I'm at work all the time, and I'm being fiscally responsible. I'm being the best environmental steward I can be. I'm a good father and have been a mentor to several younger staff members over the years. Keeping any kind of status or class level has never been one of my career goals. So I don't get invited to any special luncheons or get a pat on the back at a meeting from my peers. Oh well, chances are I'll be at work and unable to attend anyway.

**Thad Thompson**  
Superintendent, Terry Hills Golf Course  
Batavia, N.Y.

Thanks for covering this topic. I couldn't agree more with Christopher S. Gray Sr. and his comments against certification. The GCSAA shouldn't be creating more classifications and separation among its members, but the almighty buck is what drives the decision to do so. You're not better at your job and doing more of a service to your members or customers by attaining certification. Of course, it's important to continue to learn and grow, but that's better done in many ways other than by spending money to be certified by the GCSAA. Most of us want to be the best we can be and this is why we spend our time at the course working on improving the experience with sound agronomics, dedication and passion – not some title. You advance yourself by your performance day after day and year after year – not by a test and a title given out by the GCSAA.

**Doug Brooks**  
Superintendent,  
Denver (Colo.) Country Club

## What Would the Big Three Say to Rowdy Golfers?

I read with interest Larry Aylward's article – "The Big Three on Growing the Game" – in the August issue. It was, indeed, an interesting read whose content was made credible with the responses from Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player. I believe they reinforced some factors that have been in play for some time.

There is another negative factor that has been growing for several years. I refer to course conduct of both participants and spectators. The conduct of most professionals on and off the course is exemplary, but the crowd conduct at many tour events has become akin to European soccer contests. Fueled by booze and beer sales to boost event revenue, the result has led to a small percentage of the spectators behaving like drunken sailors. Small in numbers as they may be, they're obvious by their boisterous and unruly behavior.

Particularly, the stadium events appear to support or look the other way to the disorderly conduct that takes away from the original congenial and respectful crowd atmosphere typical of the professional golf scene of a bygone era. Even television coverage has picked up on it. The crowd background noise at the recent Buick Open, along with Cialis and Viagra commercials, isn't the best for family viewing. Perhaps Gary Player can shed some light on how we should explain these commercials as we watch these programs with our grandchildren of both genders.



But it's not just the professional scene. I live on a private, non-equity golf course. There has been a growing trend from a small percentage of members who roam the course over-indulged and carry on in a loud, profane and vulgar manner, including relieving themselves in the middle of the fairways. Complaints to the course's owner have fallen on deaf ears as beer and booze sales prevail. I've seen similar conduct on public courses as well.

It's a condition that needs attention. Add these conditions to the mix and it's not surprising the game has lost some of its character and appeal.

**John D. Smith**  
**Concerned Golfer**  
**Stillwater, Minn.**

### Thoughts on 'Deep Thoughts'

While Rick Slattery ("Deep Thoughts" column, June) doesn't think the Democrats (and President Barack Obama) will regulate the golf industry out of business, he neglected to mention that Obama and his Democratic cohorts spent most of Obama's first 100 days in office bad-mouthing American businesses in general and specifically went after the travel, convention and golf industries – going so far as to publicly chastise and berate Northern Trust Corp. for daring to sponsor a golf tournament.

This was a chilling and unprecedented attack on our industry. I suppose Mr. Slattery would view this as nothing more than a harmless "message of change" from our esteemed president. Well, I, for one, don't view it as harmless.

And, unlike Mr. Slattery, I'm not overly concerned about the "global demand" for fertilizer and water, which are essentially local products. I'm far more concerned about whether or not Obama and the Democrats – and their environmentalist supporters – are going to (further) restrict and eventually forbid golf courses from using fertilizers and water, thus regulating us out of business ultimately.

**Dennis E. Bishop**  
**President & CEO**  
**Claremont Golf Course**

### Congrats on Keeping an Open Mind

I wanted to congratulate Ron Furlong on the article he wrote ("Keep an Open Mind") in the September *Golfdom*. I thought it to be the most valuable piece in the issue. Your willingness to get out in front of tough issues, and challenge us by getting us out of our comfort zone, is a sign of true courage and leadership, and is highly valuable to our industry.

**Scott A. Houston**  
**Business Manager of Professional Products/North America**  
**AgraQuest Inc.**

# The Art is in the Details.

## SaLibré™

Reduce salts; enjoy better  
turf performance



## Black Onyx™

Aquatic "Wow"!

## Green Lawnger®

New formula:  
naturally green longer



**You've seen it.** Lush and healthy fairways connecting perfectly manicured tee boxes and greens. Rich, black aquatic features looking more real than real. Even decorative plantings and flowers almost magically appear more vivid and vibrant. Some call it the "wow" factor. But you know the secret - greater attention to the details.

Becker Underwood products are designed to help you tend the details more effectively ...while also helping lower overall maintenance costs with environmentally friendly tools. Learn more about these and other Becker Underwood products at [www.beckerunderwood.com](http://www.beckerunderwood.com) or contact your agronomic products supplier for details.

ISO 9001:2000  
REGISTERED

801 Dayton Avenue, Ames, IA 50010 USA

toll free (US) 800-232-5907

[www.beckerunderwood.com](http://www.beckerunderwood.com)

**BECKER  
UNDERWOOD®**