

I was that lonely guy at the restaurant, about to eat lunch by himself. It's always a good feeling when the hostess gives you a sad look and says, "Just one?" Or my other favorite, "Party of... one?"

Yes, I was alone, but I was not without entertainment. I nabbed a copy of the Kansas City alternative weekly paper, *The Pitch* (www.pitch.com), to keep me distracted.

The cover story of that issue was called "The Answering Machine." In that feature, the staff at *The Pitch* attempted to answer some fun questions about the Kansas City Metro area. Questions included, "Is there really a jail cell located in Arrowhead Stadium?" (There is, and I've managed to stay out of it thus far. I had less luck at Wrigley Field.) And, "Why does former mayor Richard Berkley still dye his hair black? (They couldn't solve that one.)"

As I sat there and read through the questions, it occurred to me that this same concept could be fun to apply to the golf industry, and as a feature story in *Golfdom*. After brainstorming the concept with my team and a few select superintendents, we had our questions and we were off and running. (Now you know why I've been so inquisitive on Twitter lately.)

So credit where credit is due: This idea was by no means original. It was absolutely "borrowed" from our friends at *The Pitch*. And I'm glad they had the idea, because it became a fun assignment for us here at *Golfdom*.

Steven Tingle put out the call to all of his LinkedIn connections, seeking a superintendent who has worked at all four types of facilities — public, private, muni and resort — and got back more than 100 responses. John Walsh received emails from South Korea from the creator of PoaCure, a new product that we learned has superintendents buzzing with excitement. I posed the question of "Who is the most famous living superintendent?" to our 1,000 Twitter followers, and had a regular Twitter debate rolling by that afternoon. One of the suggested famous superintendents even joined the conversation. (If he is indeed the most famous, he's also very accessible, which is

Let's Not Agree to Disagree

BY SETH JONES



SO IF YOU DISAGREE WITH ONE OF OUR ANSWERS — LET'S FACE IT, NONE OF OUR ANSWERS IS A BLACK-AND-WHITE, WRONG OR RIGHT ANSWER — LET US KNOW ABOUT IT.

a great characteristic to have in a celebrity.)

During one of the brainstorming sessions, a serious question was asked: What if readers really disagree with one of our answers?

My answer to that one: Then that would be awesome. It would mean that our readers cared, our readers read the story, and they had an opinion they felt strongly enough to email us, Tweet us, or maybe even call us.

Unlike the article that appeared in *The Pitch*, none of our answers is a black-and-white, wrong or right answer. So if you disagree with one of our answers, let us know about it. Maybe we bring this feature back next year, and maybe we'll rely on you as one of our expert sources.

It's doubtful that any of these answers will change the way you care for your golf course, but I feel strongly that we did come up with something that you'll enjoy reading before stashing this issue in the bathroom for the crew. Next month we'll narrow our focus and give you an exclusive look behind the scenes with a superintendent who we believe is doing some interesting practices at his course. But this month, we poke the beehive with a stick and see where these questions and answers lead. I'm confident that our readers like it when we poke the beehive.

And the next time the hostess asks me, "Party of... one?" I'll smile and say yes, but between you and me, whenever I have to dine alone, I'm typically thinking about our 16,000 readers. And that's good company to be in.

Email Jones at sjones@northcoastmedia.net. If you'd like to read the article that inspired this month's cover story, Google search "The Pitch" and "Answering Machine."