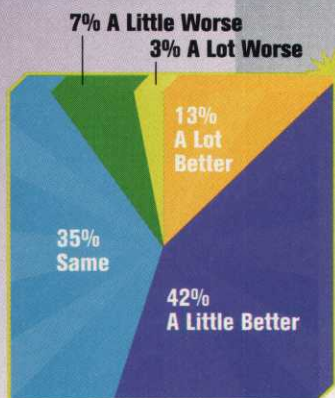


# Say, Aren't You the Superintendent?

**S**ince the GCSAA has spent so much time, money and energy raising the profile of superintendents with golfers, the association should be pleased to know that superintendents believe their image with average golfers is getting better, according to our Superintendent State of the Industry Survey.

A majority — 55 percent — feel the image of superintendents is “a little better” or “a lot better” with golfers.

**Do you feel that the average golfer's appreciation for the superintendent is getting better or worse?**



of the course,” Leventhal says. “Golfers still don’t know exactly what we do, but at least they have a vague sense that we’re important to keeping their golf courses in good shape.”

On the other end of the spectrum is Terry McNamara, superintendent at Tarry Brae Muni GC in South Fallsburg, N.Y. He says respect for superintendents is slowly diminishing. He points to golfers’ lack of repairing ball marks and raking bunkers as indications that they don’t care about course maintenance.

McNamara comes from a family of superintendents, including his three brothers and his father. He says they have each expressed the same sentiment around the dinner

table during the holidays: Respect for superintendents among golfers continues to disappear, and GCSAA is powerless to do anything about it.

“I understand there has been this huge influx of players, and there isn’t time to teach them all the basic rules of golf course etiquette,” McNamara says. “But the people who come to you and raise hell about poor conditions are the same ones who wouldn’t fix ball marks if their lives depended on it.” ■

— Frank H. Andorka Jr.

Count Stuart Leventhal among the 55 percent. Leventhal, superintendent at Interlachen CC in Winter Park, Fla., says that respect for the role superintendents play in keeping the golf course in playing shape is higher than it was 10 years ago.

“Word is out that the pro doesn’t take care

of the course,” Leventhal says. “Golfers still don’t know exactly what we do, but at least they have a vague sense that we’re important to keeping their golf courses in good shape.”

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# Service & Support

## Satisfied Customers

The good news for golf course maintenance manufacturers and their dealers and distributors is that most superintendents are content with customer service. According to our Superintendent State of the Industry Survey, 43 percent of superintendents say that service and support from local dealers and distributors has gotten better in the past few years. Only 10 percent say that service is worse, and 47 percent report that service is the same, which probably means it's decent.

**Over the past few years, has the service and support from local dealers and distributors gotten better or worse?**



other, Ihms says.

"That's benefiting us," he adds. "The market is more competitive, and there's better service because of it."

Ihms says Bent Tree's name also has something to do with the improved service. "The name of our facility has clout," Ihms adds, noting that Bent Tree hosts a PGA Senior Tour event. "They want our business."

John Cummings, superintendent of Berry Hills CC, in Charleston, W Va., was one of only 10 percent of superintendents who said that service and support from local distributors is worse. That's because Berry Hills CC has no local distributors for some of its major equipment. For instance,

service is the same, which probably means it's decent.

Keith Ihms, superintendent of Bent Tree CC in Dallas, says service is better because the industry's three major equipment manufacturers changed distributors in his area about five years ago. Before that, service was suffering, and the manufacturers recognized the problem. "The three new distributors have done a better job for me on loaner equipment, parts availability and overall service," Ihms says.

Because they're new, the three distributors are more hungry for business and competing with each

a major mower distributor is about a four-hour drive away.

"It's all based on our location," Cummings says. "We're in no-man's land for distributors."

Hence, Cummings has little personal contact with sales representatives and technicians. It's also difficult to get repair people to Berry Hills CC in a timely manner. "It makes downtime a little longer," he says.

To combat the problem, Cummings has increased his inventory on certain parts, but that has also driven up his maintenance budget. Cummings is not angry, and he understands that locations of dealers and distributors are based on business decisions. "It's just the way things are in today's business world," he notes. ■

— Larry Aylward

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# Issues

## The More Things Change...

... will they stay the same? Examining 2001's pressing issues

Last year, the world waited for computers to destroy the world. Fortunately, the concerns heading into 2001 are less frightening, but there are a few issues that bear watching. Here are some of the issues superintendents will be talking about this time next year:

### Rounds vs. course construction

In late October, the National Golf Foundation reported that 408 golf courses had opened in 2000. At the end of last year, 936 courses were under construction, with 760 designated to open this year. NGF usually projects that only 60 percent of those courses will open on time. But even then, the number of courses opened this year will easily eclipse last year's record of 496 openings.

NGF found that public facilities (daily fee and municipi-

pal) have dominated openings over the last several years, and it doesn't see that trend changing soon. In 1999, 84 percent of all course openings were public courses. NGF reports that 91 percent of planned courses and 87 percent under construction will also be public.

The number of rounds in 1999 reached 564 million last year, according to NGF. The average number of rounds per golfer increased to 21.3 rounds per year. NGF estimates there are 26.4 million golfers in the United States, with core golfers (those who played eight or more rounds in the year) making up 13.7 million.

Drought conditions pumped up the number of rounds last year, so what will the 2000 numbers show given the odd weather patterns that dominated the season? And can the numbers last given some unsteadiness in the economy? Stay tuned.

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## ADA

As Casey Martin's golf car-use case rolls into the Supreme Court (a decision is expected this month), how golf courses deal with the access issues mandated in the Americans with Disabilities Act hangs over superintendents like the sword of Damocles.

There are 54 million people in the United States with disabilities as defined by the ADA, and around 600,000 of them golf. But Michael Quimbey, vice president of environmental affairs for Dallas-based Club Corp., says superintendents shouldn't be worried. Rules defining compliance requirements will be issued by the U.S. Department of Justice sometime in 2002, and Quimbey expects them to require only minor adjustments.

"It's a matter of changing our attitudes to golfers with disabilities," Quimbey says. "We, as an industry, have to remember that these people are golfers first and disabled second. When you realize that, it won't be that hard to accommodate them."

Quimbey and other members of the golf industry have worked on a subcommittee that produced six rules that courses will have to follow to be in compliance with the ADA once the Department of Justice issues the final rules in 2002. Then golf courses will probably have a year to comply, he says.

## Management companies

There's rarely a middle ground for most superintendents when it comes to management companies: They either love 'em or they hate 'em. But understanding that management companies are here to stay, what impact are they having on the industry?

The consensus is that well-run management companies add tremendous stability to the business side of golf. For some facilities, aligning with a management company provides them with additional resources that they wouldn't otherwise be able to tap. Superintendents who work for good companies talk of job security and the possibilities for advancement as two significant advantages that management companies offer.

On the other hand, superintendents are upset with what they view as unethical recruitment tactics of management companies such as mass mailings and unannounced course visits. Some superintendents worry that owners are starting to listen to the pitch more closely.



**Casey Martin's golf car-use case shouldn't have a severe impact on recreational golf.**

PHOTO CREDIT: AP

Though management companies have mushroomed, the weaker ones are slowly being squeezed out of the market. That leaves more courses to be divvied up by three or four large firms, constricting the job market outside of management companies more than ever for superintendents.

## FQPA

No single national government regulation raises the ire of superintendents more than the Food Quality Protection Act, enacted in 1996 to protect Americans — particularly children — from pesticide risks associated with food production.

Industry observers, however, believe that what started out as a good idea has been hijacked by the EPA and turned into an all-out war on pesticides, particularly in light of the actions taken against a variety of pesticides this year. It seems almost inevitable that more pesticides will come under fire next year, and it's important for superintendents to let their voices be heard, say industry insiders.

Rumors have Carol Browner retiring as chief administrator of the EPA. If that happens, the industry will have to watch closely to see who takes her place. ■

—Frank H. Andorka Jr.

## Fewer clippings.

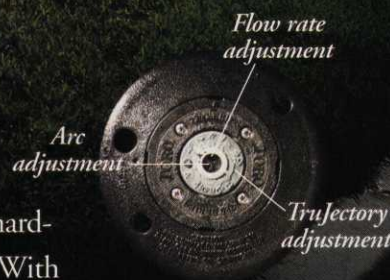
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# PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

These golf industry members made a difference in 2000

*Editor's note: There's a good chance you've never heard of some of these people, so it's our honor to introduce them to you. They made outstanding and worthwhile contributions to their profession. For that, we salute them.*

**BY GOLFDOM STAFF**



## JOHN SZKLINSKI

The superintendent at Southern Hills CC in Tulsa, Okla., has endured vandalism and a maintenance facility fire while gearing up for the U.S. Open in June. Vandals damaged eight greens on Southern Hills' championship course in the summer of 1999. Last February, the maintenance facility burned. Szklinski, who joined the club two years ago, also had to deal this year with one of

the hottest and driest summers in the city's history. However, he has rolled with the punches in preparation for the 2001 tournament. "We've persevered through a lot," he says.



## RICK JACOBSON AND CHRIS COCHRAN

These up-and-coming architects quietly finished one of the late Bruce Borland's design projects, Coyote Creek GC, near Peoria, Ill., Borland's hometown. The two designers also made sure the \$50,000 fee for the project was donated to a Florida church that Borland had designated as recipient for the

*Continued on page 48*

*Continued from page 47*  
money before his death. They're truly two of the good guys.

#### FRED SLAGLE

The Ohio golf course architect and owner is on a mission to get more kids playing and experiencing golf. Last summer, Slagle opened his Little Thunder GC in Madison (near Cleveland), a scaled-down, 18-hole course with bunkers, ponds and other components that characterize full-size tracks. Slagle says children need more kid-size courses, not 7,000 yards of intimidation.

#### DENNIS WATKINS

The superintendent at Lords Valley CC in Newfoundland, Pa., deserves recognition for his work in devising a gray leaf spot model that has helped the Skybit weather service gain accolades for its accuracy in diagnosing the disease. East Coast superintendents give Watkins credit for saving much of their turf from an outbreak of the disease that had devastated courses as recently as two years ago.

#### RAY DAVIES

The CGCS at Crystal Springs GC in Burlingame, Calif., helped spur interest in and support for the Professional Development Initiative. No matter how you feel about PDI, we chose Davies because he cites his concern for the well-being of superintendents. "I'm among superintendents who believe that we can address [our] challenges and frustrations by taking our destiny into our own hands," he says.

#### AL JANSEN

The superintendent of Baraboo CC in Baraboo, Wis., has helped spur support against PDI. No matter how you feel about PDI, we chose Jansen because he cites his concern for the well-being of superintendents. "Promote the association by what we do for each other, for

golf and for the environment," Jansen says. "Do not implement a program of segregation like the PDI."

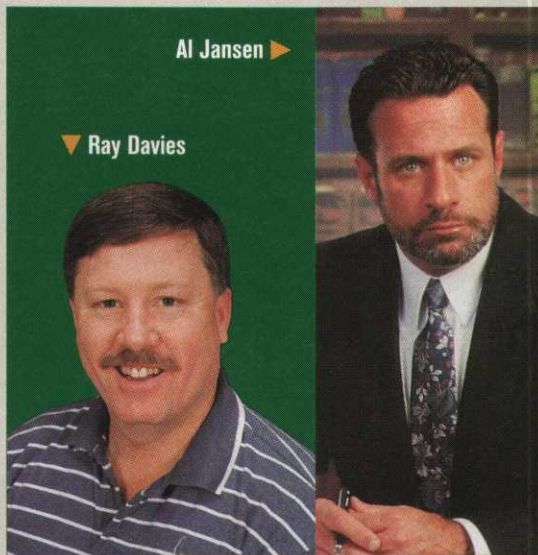
#### BOBBY WEED

Weed is recognized as one of the industry's top young designers. The Pete Dye protégé and former superintendent

participating NGCOA member courses for participants in USGA Foundation-supported junior programs nationally. NGCOA entered into this partnership as part of its player development program, "Get Linked. Play Golf." "We will be able to provide affordable, real course experiences to economically disadvantaged juniors," Hughes says.

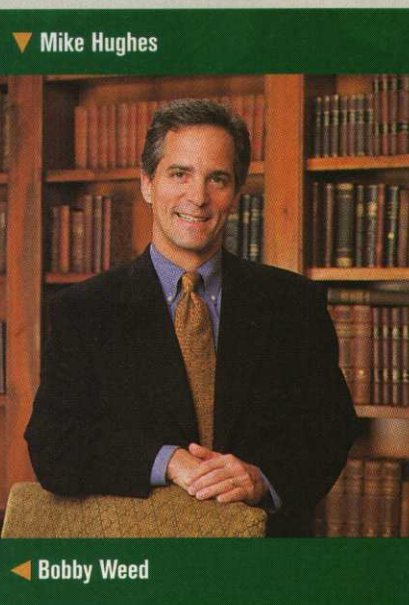
#### TIGER WOODS

He's the galaxy's best golfer. Thanks to Tiger, you have job security as superintendents, designers, owners and gen-



▼ Ray Davies

Al Jansen ▶



▼ Mike Hughes

▶ Bobby Weed

says a goal is to design more maintenance-friendly courses. "My design style mixes the old with the new in an appropriate fashion," he stresses.

#### MIKE HUGHES

The executive director of the National Golf Course Owners Association is on a mission to get more people — women, children and seniors, too — playing golf. One of Hughes' latest projects is the Kids on Course program with the USGA. Kids on Course provides \$1 green fees at

eral managers because he has single-handedly made the game more popular. The Tiger bump, as it were, will help the game keep up with the building boom that is upon us as his extraordinary play and 1,000-watt smile bring more golfers into the game. All Woods did in 2000 was win the U.S. Open, the British Open and the PGA Championship (first time someone has won three Majors in one year since Ben Hogan did in 1951), as well as the Canadian Open and five other tournaments.

#### PHIL MICKELSON

He was voted the No. 1 PGA Tour player in terms of sportsmanship by

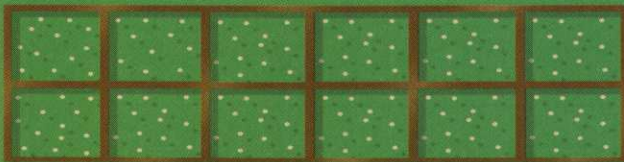
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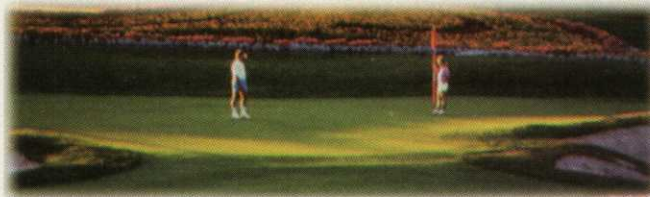
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Circle No. 127

Continued from page 48

GCSAA members in the 2000 Leadership Survey. Mickelson almost always has nice things to say about superintendents, no matter how well or how poorly he has played during the week.

#### TUCK TATE

One of the last of the elder statesmen of the great generation of superintendents

who built the profession into what it is today. Those who knew Tuck know just how important he was in Michigan and around the nation.

#### TIM MORAGHAN

He's the chief agronomist for the USGA and one of the hardest-working men in golf. Despite challenging weather con-

ditions at Pebble Beach this year, Moraghan still managed to have the course in tip-top shape to witness an historic victory by Tiger Woods in the U.S. Open.

No matter what anyone else talked about during the tournament, not a whisper was heard about poor course conditions. That was music to Moraghan's ears.



#### DR. GIL MORGAN

The PGA Senior Tour player is active in Swing for Sight, an annual event that helps raise funds for Prevent Blindness Oklahoma, a charity that provides free screenings for children in hopes of catching potential eyesight problems in the early stages. Morgan has had eyesight problems for several years.

#### OSCAR MILES

Who could ask for a better representative of the profession? Both the Merit Club and superintendents everywhere benefited for Miles' savvy ability to host the Women's Open like no one before him.



#### BOB LOHMANN

This quiet architectural talent finally got his due for his work at the Merit Club and his professional leadership. Lohmann may not be a household name, but he's great for golf.

#### LISA BLAND

Most wouldn't recognize her name or her face, but many GCSAA members knew her voice and benefited from her commitment. This 18-year veteran of the GCSAA staff was the heart and soul of the team in Lawrence, Kan. Her untimely death was a tragedy for all. ■

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