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**Michael Dieckhoff, Superintendent
Spring Creek Ranch*
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* Ranked #2 of new private clubs by Golf Digest


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Hole of the

■ No. 1

**The Prospector Course at Superstition Mountain
Superstition Mountain, Ariz.**

Month



Gentle Beginning

The fairway of the 376-yard par-4 first hole at The Prospector Course at Superstition Mountain provides a generous landing area for golfers. According to superintendent Scott Krout, the relative ease of the course's starting hole is deliberate.

"It's an easier, enjoyable hole," Krout says. "It doesn't hit you over the head. We like it because it doesn't force players to walk to the second tee mad. But the course gets harder from there."

At the dogleg, three bunkers (two right, one left) stand ready to snare errant shots. Krout says the left bunker doesn't come into play, however, unless golfers hit from the gold tees (the Nicklaus tees, in local parlance, after its designer).

The only true maintenance challenge concerns the turf that surrounds the bunkers. Krout says the challenge is to keep the turf well-watered without destroying the playability of the hazards.

Remember: Play the Major Challenge at www.majorchallenge.com.

Golfdom's Hole of the Month is presented in partnership with:

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Photo taken at Tobacco Road G.C., Sanford, NC



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My recent attendance at GCSAA conference sessions and state regulatory meetings left me with an unspecified irritation with the general state of the industry. Therefore, I want to share this laundry list of things that are bothering me, more out of frustration than anything else.

Water

- Just how far are we going to let a golf ball go? Maybe Titleist and Nike should be spending more to find out how far a drop of water will go to nourish turf.
- Why place tighter restrictions on golf course irrigation? Golf courses only use 1.5 percent of the water.
- Sign seen in Georgia — “Wanted: Golf Courses. Bring your own water.”
- Sign seen in New Jersey — “I reclaim this water in the name of irrigation.”
- Florida water management district official to superintendent, “Have you assessed your members for your reverse osmosis plant yet?”

The game

- Some people say technology is making golf courses obsolete. *Au contraire*. In reality, the EPA, activists and local politicians are making courses obsolete.
- Let's see: high-end public courses with high maintenance features continue to be built while low numbers of people are taking up and staying in the game. Can you say (or, more appropriately, shout), “Duh?”
- Fast greens prove speed kills. Besides, they also slow play.
- To achieve TV tournament conditions on a golf course, David Copperfield must be the greenkeeper because it's only an illusion.
- On the 2002 Honda Classic: If golf professionals can't finish a round of golf in four hours, how are amateurs supposed to?

Perspectives

- In a battle between the Nature Conservancy with Meryl Streep and East Podunk GCSA with John Doe, it's a no-brainer which side the media will choose to cover positively.

So Many Issues, So Many Gripes

BY JOEL JACKSON



I WANT TO SHARE

THIS LAUNDRY LIST

OF THINGS THAT

ARE BOTHERING

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FRUSTRATION THAN

ANYTHING ELSE

- What golfers don't see when they watch The Masters on TV is that Augusta employs a cast of thousands and has six months to prepare.
- If God had intended for trees to be planted on golf courses, He wouldn't have made Scotland the birthplace of golf.

Golf and the environment

- Is anyone else troubled by the fact that there are billions of dollars in foundation grants to support environmental activists in their complaints, but there are only thousands of dollars for turf research grants to explain to the activists why our practices are safe?
- Sign seen in Minnesota: “Be prosperous without phosphorous —we dare you.”
- If California wants to get rid of pesticides, they should just deregulate them like they did the power companies.
- The EPA doesn't ban pesticides. It badgers chemical companies with impossible demands until they surrender. Then the EPA announces a voluntary cancellation by the registrant.

Club politics

- Remain as neutral during club disputes as the water in your spray tank. If you get too basic, the members won't understand your point. If you get too acidic, the disgruntled members won't forget you.
- The common refrain of “what have you done for us lately” comes only a couple of weeks after the best conditions ever for the member-guest.
- The pro shop is the communications center where rumors are born or die. It's all up to you as to which fate they suffer.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

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CIRCLE NO. 116

What's the Future Hold?

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR., MANAGING EDITOR

Jan Toth has worked at the Lakeview course at the Scanton Golf Resort in Morgantown, W.Va., for 17 years. The 43-year-old is entering his fifth season as an assistant to superintendent Don Dodson, who Toth says has taught him plenty. In his time away from the course, however, Toth dreams of doing something more ambitious.

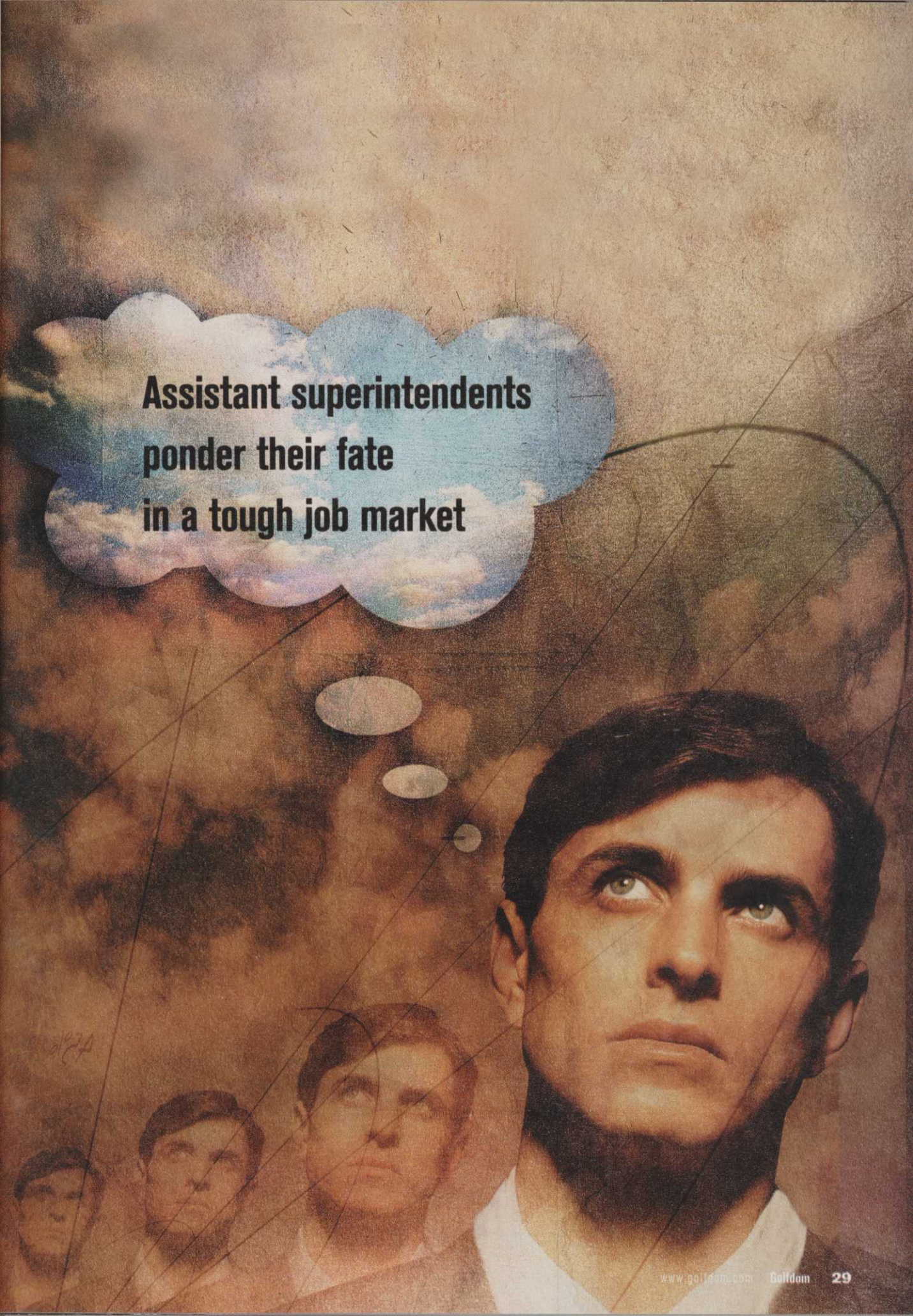
"Someday, I'd like to [be the superintendent of] my own course," Toth says. "I'm in no hurry. I've been turned down for some opportunities over the past couple of years, so I'm a little frustrated. Fortunately, I'm patient."

Toth's declaration echoes the refrain from assistants who feel they're ready to take charge of their own courses. Their confidence in their own abilities, however, isn't enough to propel them to superintendent posts. They must carefully prepare themselves by showing patience, networking with their peers, taking calculated risks and studying the job market. That way, when opportunity knocks, they'll be ready to answer the door.

Forgo false time frames

Assistant superintendents often set themselves up for disappointment by creating a false urgency about ascending to their

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**Assistant superintendents
ponder their fate
in a tough job market**

What's the Future Hold?



MONTY DAVIS

Jaron Gerber, an assistant at Rolling Hills CC in Wichita, Kan., warns his colleagues against setting arbitrary deadlines about landing superintendent jobs.

Definitely Not *Stuck* As An Assistant

Donny Liston, 54, never bemoans the fact that he's been an assistant superintendent at the Lakeview course at the Scanticon Golf Resort in Morgantown, W. Va., for 10 years. In fact, he revels in the stability he has experienced in an industry where switching jobs frequently is the rule rather than the exception.

"I'm a hard-working guy who likes working with my hands," Liston says. "There's a lot of pressure on the superintendent on a daily basis, dealing with the corporate people and stuff. I don't want to do that."

Liston has worked at Lakeview since 1971, when he started as a mechanic. He's worked for three superintendents during his 31-year stint. He says he's learned from all of them, including current superintendent Don Dodson.

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first superintendent jobs. Ron Furlong, superintendent at Avalon GC in Burlington, Wash., understands the frustration a specific time frame can bring. He joined Everett Golf & CC in Mukilteo, Wash., with a plan to work there three years before earning a top spot at a private club. Instead, he ended up working there for four years before landing a head job earlier this year.

During those four years, Furlong estimates he sent out 40 to 50 résumés with no results. He usually received either no response or a "Dear Ron" letter rejecting his application.

"It got to the point where my wife, Nikki, started opening those letters for me because it was so depressing," Furlong says. "She would play Peter Gabriel's song, *Don't Give Up*, to buoy my spirits."

Furlong says his most important advice for assistants is not to let despair overwhelm them. "If you keep working hard, your chance will eventually come," he says.

The waiting is easier if you haven't set a time limit, says Jaron Gerber, a three-year assistant at Rolling Hills CC in Wichita, Kan. Gerber says he'd like to run his own course someday, but he's willing to pay his dues.

"It's a competitive market, so when a job opens that you really want, you have to go after it aggressively," Gerber says. "In the meantime,

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"If you pay attention, you can learn how to do almost anything on the golf course, without the hassles of having to deal with golfer expectations directly," Liston says. "It's perfectly fine with me to have others have to deal with those headaches."

His favorite part of being an assistant is taking the crew out and doing whatever Dodson asks of them. He loves the feeling of accomplishment when a job is done, as well as the pleasant exhaustion that comes with physical labor.

"I imagine I'll retire from this business as an assistant, but I'll have no regrets," Liston says. "This industry has been good to me for a long time, and I'm happy with the job I'm doing right now. This is where I plan to end my career."

— Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor