

## The Apple Doesn't Fall ...

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Stottern says of the profession, although his three younger brothers elected not to be superintendents. "I started my career as soon as I grew old enough to roam Broadmoor with my grandfather and father."

Jay Pock, 30, says there's no doubt that grass growing is in his family's genes. Jay says his father taught Ernie and him to "listen to the grass" to understand its needs. Not everyone can *listen* to the grass.

"It takes a special ear to hear what the grass is saying," Jay states in all seriousness. "I honestly believe that it's genetic."

John Greene's family tree sprouts with five generations of superintendents. His great-grandfather, John Forbes, used horses and mules to help clear the land for the Donald Ross-designed Linville (N.C.) GC in the 1920s. Forbes was superintendent of the course until he retired in 1942 and was replaced by his son-in-law, Arl Greene Sr., John's grandfather, who stayed at the course until 1968.

Greene Sr. had six sons, three of whom became superintendents, including Arl Greene Jr., John's father. Despite working for his father as a teenager, John was uncertain that he wanted to become a superintendent after graduating from high school. So he headed to Appalachian State University to study business. But after a year, a golf course maintenance career beckoned, and Greene transferred to North Carolina State to earn a turf degree. When he graduated in 1974, he took a job as superintendent at Brookwood Hills GC in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Today, the 48-year-old Greene is certified superintendent of Diamond Creek GC, a new Tom Fazio track being built in Banner Elk, N.C.

"I never went into the business with the intent of carrying on some family tradition," Greene says. "I don't know if anybody in my family did. It's just something we migrated toward and stuck with."

But it's possible there's something in the Greene family's blood that helped produce four generations of superintendents. Fathers can pass physical traits like big noses and bald heads, so it's possible they can impart intellectual traits that affect their kids' career choices.

If there's a character trait a superintendent can pass to his son, it's a love for the outdoors. According to Australian vocational psy-

chologists Robert Pryor and Neville Taylor, many superintendents fall into the "naturalist" personality type.

"Naturalists display characteristics of resourcefulness, are active, realistic, sensitive to their environment and often self-reliant," according to Pryor and Taylor, pointing out that naturalists also like to learn about plants and animals. "They love the outdoors, and they frequently comment that if they had to work in an office they would go crazy."

Ernie Pock says he and his brother became superintendents partly because they couldn't see themselves working in offices. "My brother and I are not the kind of people that like to sit inside and push papers," the 31-year-old says.

Neither was their dad, 55-year-old Mike Pock, who wanted to be a cowboy but settled on being a superintendent.

"I love the outdoors," Mike says. "I tried to make a living [raising] cows, but I never had any money. [Golf course maintenance] was the nearest thing to it that paid well."

Mark Woodward, superintendent of Dobson Ranch and Riverview golf courses in Mesa, Ariz., says working outside is what got him

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**The Hadwicks know the profession can be tremendously fulfilling and terribly frustrating – but they wouldn't want to do anything else.**

## Not Programmed for 'Normal' Hours

Long and wacky hours? Big deal. The doctor-like schedule of the job doesn't seem to bother most superintendents. Let's just say their clocks aren't programmed to work banker's hours.

"This isn't eight to five," says John Hadwick, certified superintendent of Grand Island Municipal GC in Grand Island, Neb., whose father Joe was a superintendent. "You have to live this, and you have to love it!"

John Greene, certified superintendent of Diamond Creek GC in Banner Elk, N.C., also grew up the son of a superintendent and remembers the nights when his dad, Arl, would get up and go to the course to check on the night watermen. He knew then that the profession didn't have "normal" hours.

Most superintendents also don't mind the hard and physical labor that comes with the turf. Greene didn't follow in his father's footsteps because he

thought his dad had an easy gig as a superintendent.

The first summer he worked for his dad, Greene recalls helping to enlarge a lake at Pine Needles GC in Southern Pines, N.C. His job was to cut the common bermudagrass sod and move it. It was backbreaking work for a 14-year-old, but it wasn't bad enough to dissuade him from the profession.

Greene also learned early in his turf maintenance career that early-rising superintendents need their rest. In the summers he labored for his dad, Greene and his buddies/co-workers would work from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. and sometimes drive to Myrtle Beach nearly two hours away for some rest and relaxation. They'd stay there until two in the morning and drive back to Southern Pines in time for work. "We weren't worth much the next day," Greene admits.

– L.A., Editor



**"I never went into the business with the intent of carrying on some family tradition."**

JOHN GREENE  
CGCS  
DIAMOND CREEK GC

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hooked on the business. "It was a chance to deal with Mother Nature," says Woodward, who like his cousin, Mike Pock, worked for his grandfather, J.D. Woodward, early in his career.

Greene credits his love for the outdoors as a reason for becoming a superintendent, but stresses that people skills are also an important attribute superintendents should possess. Greene says his father taught him to respect others, including a course's members and golfers, as well as the people who work for him.

"My dad was very easy to get along with," he says. "I've adopted that philosophy."

### The pressure factor

There's nothing wrong with following in dad's footsteps — as long as dad is not pressuring his son to do so, says Rosemary Augustine, a Denver-based career coach and author of *How to Live and Work Your Passion And Still Earn a Living*. "Following in dad's footsteps can be wonderful, as long as a son wants to," she adds.

Ernie Pock beams with pride when he hears Mason say he wants to be a superintendent, but he vows not to pressure his son to pursue the profession when he gets older.

When Ernie and Jay were teenagers, their father advised them to steer away from the profession. The industry was too unstable, the pay too low and the politics too harsh, Mike

told his sons. "He said we were too bright to be growing grass for a living," Ernie recalls.

But Ernie and Jay didn't take their dad's words to heart. They wanted to become superintendents and attended Rutgers University to study turfgrass management. They worked for their father at Troon Golf and Troon North GC in Scottsdale during summers away from school. Now Mike admits, "I'm very proud they went into the business."

Stottern says his father never encouraged or discouraged his son from entering the profession. "I just evolved into the profession," he says. "I never knew anything else."

John Hadwick says his father never pressured him to become a superintendent to keep the family legacy alive.

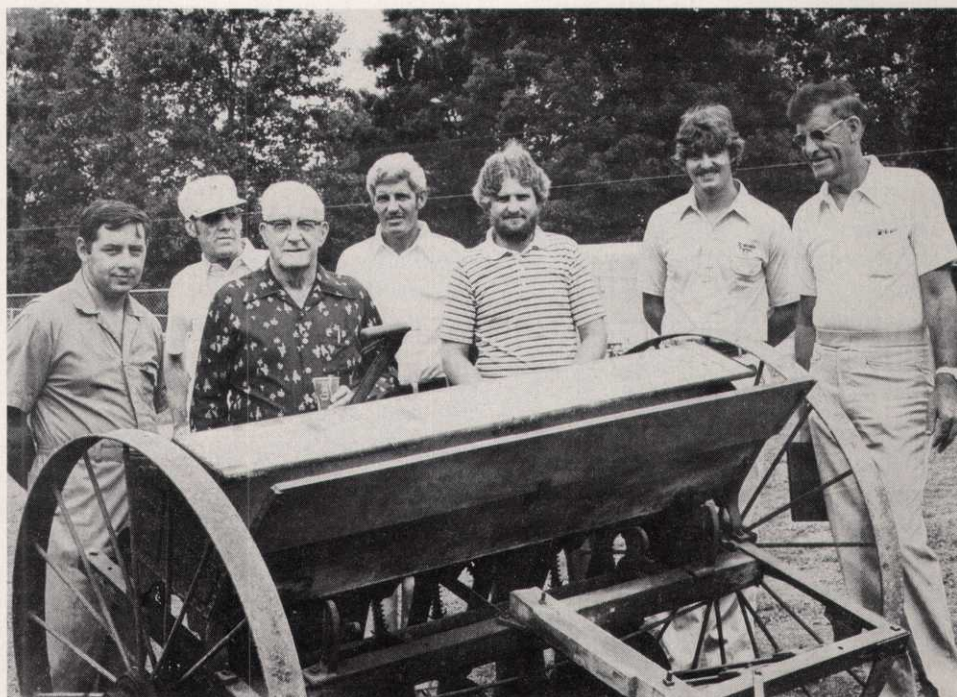
"But he gave me all the tools I needed when I told him it's what I wanted to do," John says. "He never discouraged me, and he never pushed me. I've done the same with Shane."

Augustine has advice for fathers/superintendents who wonder whether they should persuade their sons to follow them in the business — don't twist their arms. Coercion isn't healthy, especially when sons decide in their mid-20s or early-30s that they want to do something else and have nothing to fall back on.

If a superintendent's child is curious about following in his or her dad's footsteps, Au-

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► All of the Greene family members in this 1977 photo made golf course maintenance their jobs at one time or another. From left: Randy, Julian, Arl Sr., Arl Jr., Steve, John and Bernard.



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## The Apple Doesn't Fall ...

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gustine recommends the child shadow his or her dad for a week on the golf course and experience every aspect of the job, from its rewards to its hang-ups.

### How do you know?

Greene remembers the nights his dad would get up to check on the night wa-

termen. He also recalls being awakened in the night by a ringing phone. It was someone from the golf course calling to tell his father the pump station was down.

At the time, Greene thought there was no way he would become a superintendent, what with the wacky hours and weighty responsibilities. "I saw the stress my father endured," he adds.

As Greene grew older and matured, however, he realized the profession was a near-perfect match for his character.

At this point in their lives, 11-year-old Zach and 14-year-old Ben Greene also have no intention of becoming superintendents, their father says. "Ben's favorite saying is, 'Dad, you work 24/7,'" John says.

However, Greene's sons love visiting the golf course. When he was superintendent at Blowing Rock (N.C.) Club, John had Zach, then 10, happily mowing greens. Recently, John took Ben on a business trip with him to Lexington, Ky., to look at sod for the roughs at Diamond Creek. Ben had a blast.

When he brings his boys to Diamond Creek, Greene can't help but notice how they're drawn to the wide-open space of the landscape. "That's the allure of it," John says, as if he knows a special secret.

Mason Pock is obviously enamored by the profession. While he might be on his way to tending turf for a living, his dad and granddad won't be disappointed if he changes his mind when it's time to decide on a career. The same goes for Cody, Jay's 7-month-old son.

It would be cool if Mason and Cody kept the family tradition alive, but it's more important for them to be happy in their chosen professions, say Ernie, Jay and Mike.

"We won't tell them what to be," Mike says. "We'll let them make their own decisions. If they want to be superintendents, that's fine. If they want to be jet pilots, they can do that."

Only time will tell how far these apples fall from the Pock family tree. ■

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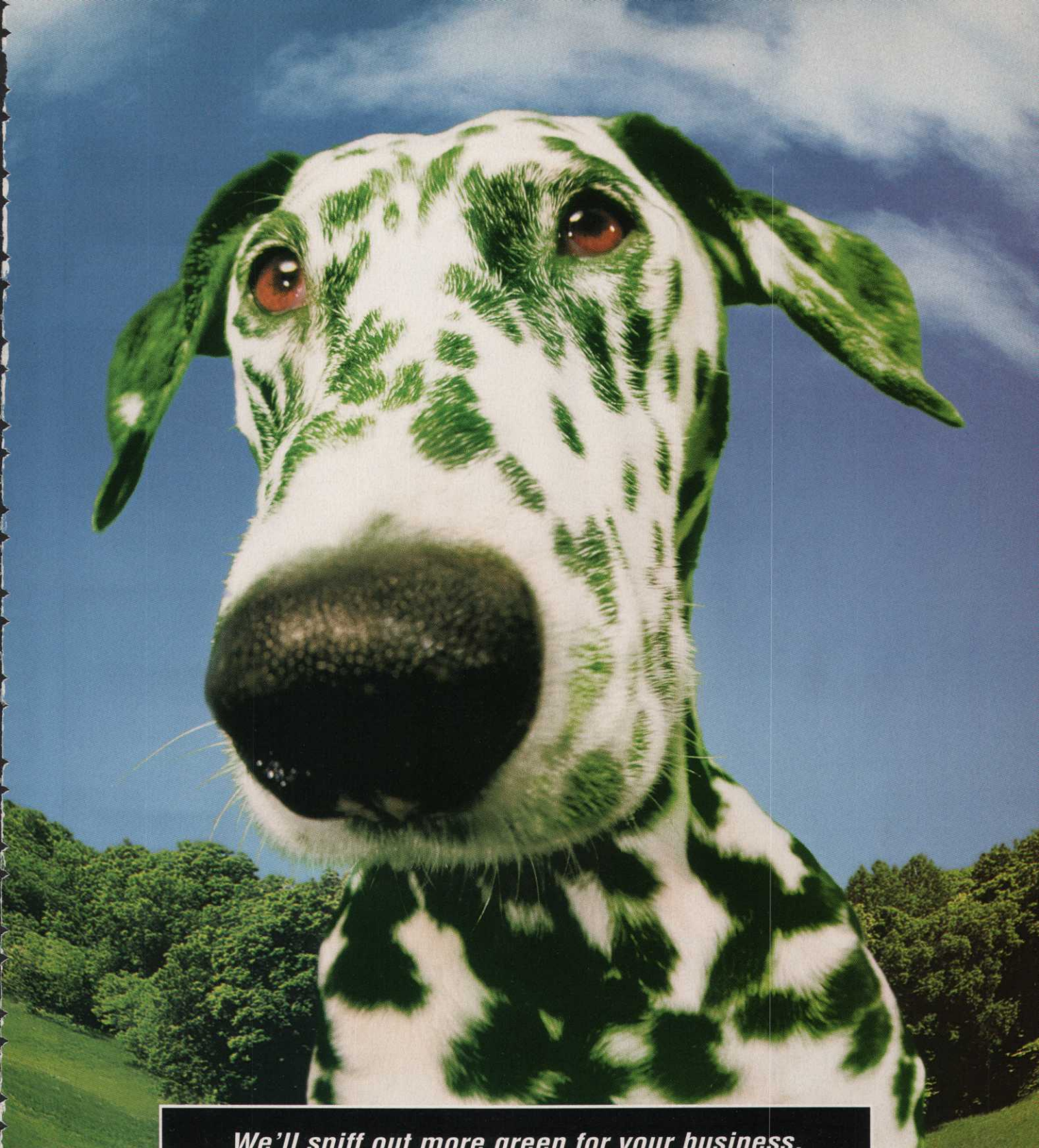
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## GCSAA's Family Tree

If you have a family history in the business, GCSAA wants to know about it. The association is recognizing the many generations of families who have made up its membership over the years. If you're a superintendent with a legacy in the business, you can contact GCSAA Curator Susanne Clement at 800-472-7878 for more information on the project.



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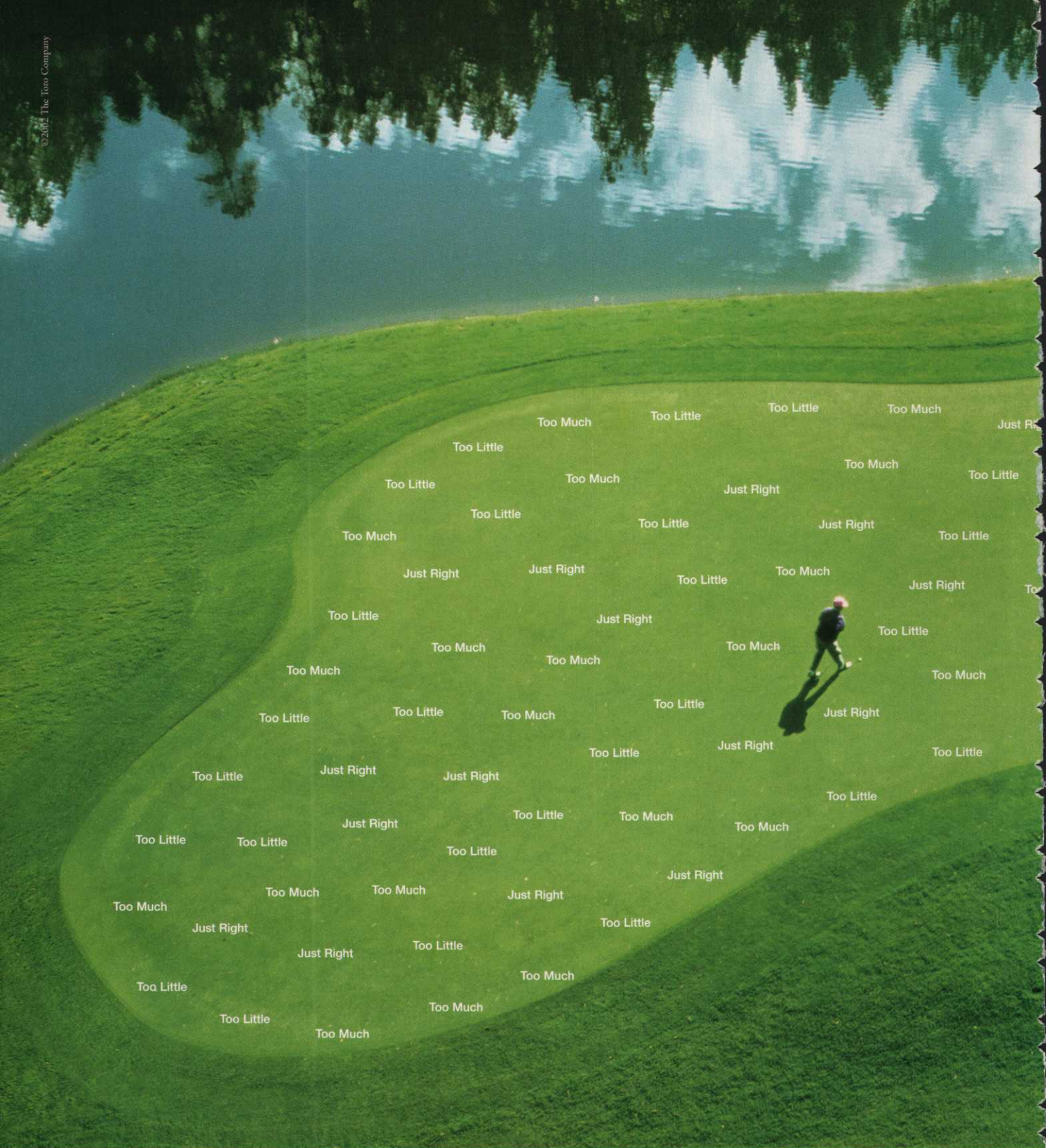
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# Chapters

Meeting attendance and volunteerism continue to pose problems, but association leaders are discovering ways to combat them

BY LARRY AYLWARD,  
EDITOR

**T**here are 102 affiliated chapters under GCSAA's expansive umbrella. Like people, no two of them are alike. Some have hundreds of members and some a handful. Some are located near big cities, others border the backwoods. But these local associations have one thing in common: the problems and challenges of satisfying members.

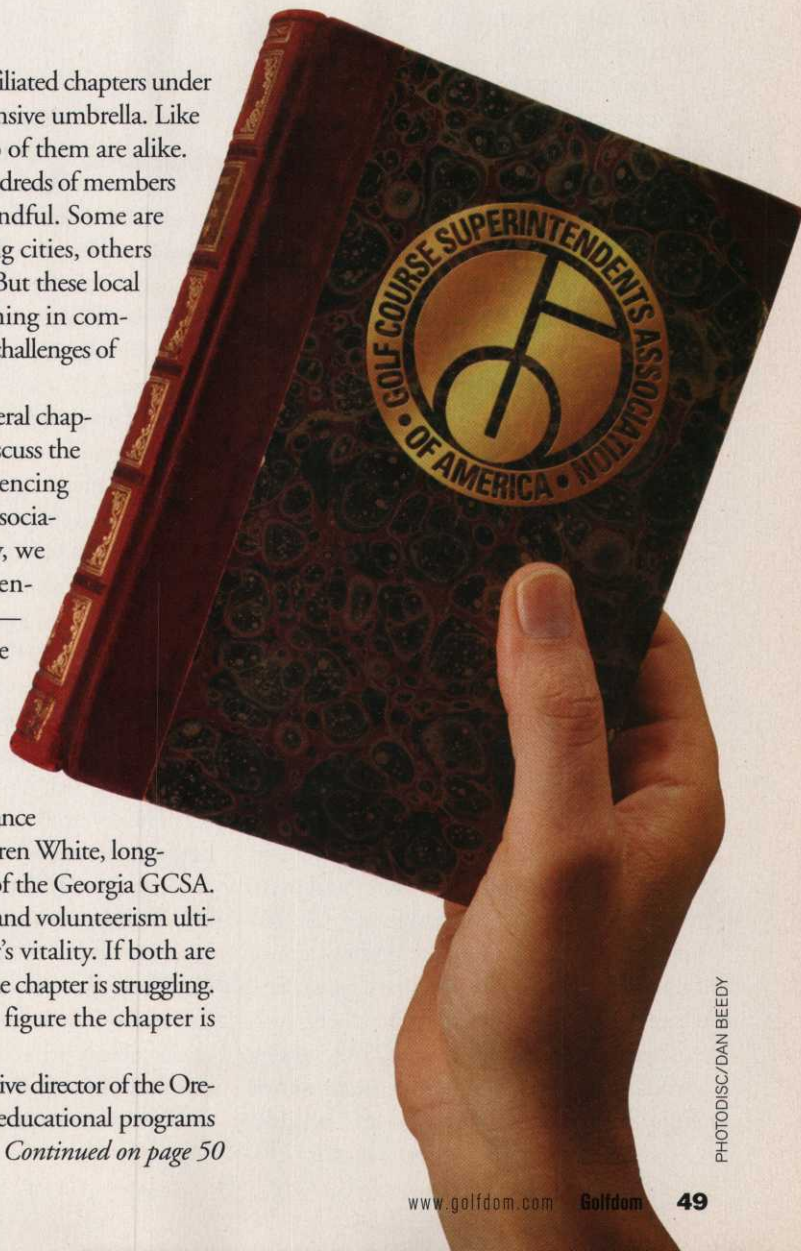
*Golfdom* spoke to several chapter leaders recently to discuss the problems they're experiencing and the states of their associations. Not surprisingly, we heard that meeting attendance and volunteerism — two problems that have plagued chapter associations for years — continue to be headaches.

"You would *always* like to have more attendance and volunteers," says Karen White, long-time executive director of the Georgia GCSA.

Meeting attendance and volunteerism ultimately reflect a chapter's vitality. If both are down, you can assume the chapter is struggling. If both are up, you can figure the chapter is sound.

Allan Clemans, executive director of the Oregon GCSA, says strong educational programs

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PHOTO/ISC/DAN BEEDY

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will attract more superintendents to meetings. Clemans says he's constantly challenged with providing value to members through worthwhile seminars. "You have to make them *want* to come," he adds.

Clemans says chapter associations must also make their educational programs interesting enough so superintendents can convince their clubs to pay for them to attend the meetings. Years ago, Clemans says chapter associations were regarded as "good ol' boys clubs." Superintendents would go to the monthly meetings, have lunch and play golf.

"But that has changed," Clemans says. "Clubs are no longer going to pay the bills for meetings like that."

Lynn Cannon, executive director of the Cactus and Pine GCSA in Arizona, says the association's meeting attendance has increased dramatically in the past few years because of improved educational programs. "We try to bring in good speakers that members know," she adds.

Rex Floyd, superintendent of Wilson CC in Franklinton, N.C., and immediate past president of the Carolinas GCSA, says more superintendent speakers will help increase meeting attendance. "I've noticed the rooms are always full when they're speaking," he adds.

Chapters also shouldn't downplay venue as a magnet for increased meeting attendance. John Shaw, certified superintendent of Rolling Hills CC and immediate past president of the Greater Pittsburgh GCSA, says attendance has nearly doubled in the past four years, partly because meetings are held at top area golf courses.

Geography will also have an impact on attendance. Brian Bossert, immediate past president of the Midwest Association of GCS, says attendance is strong at chapter meetings, except if an assembly is held outside of the Chicago area, where most of the association's members work.

Clemans says the Oregon GCSA's meeting attendance is strong, except from the far corners of the state. "It's a logistical problem," he adds.

Cannon has tried to combat a similar prob-



### **"You would always like to have more attendance and volunteers."**

KAREN WHITE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
GEORGIA GCSA

lem by moving Cactus and Pine meetings around the state. "If you go to where they are, they'll come," she adds.

Another key to improving meeting attendance is communication, association leaders say. Don't let members know of a meeting a week before it's scheduled. Georgia's White recommends mass e-mails to keep in touch with superintendents about meeting schedules and other important information.

If a chapter is healthy, more superintendents will want to volunteer for various activities. While many superintendents don't have time to volunteer, they'll find the time if they feel they're making a contribution, experts say. So when a chapter does get volunteers on board,

it has to use them effectively and not waste their time, says Don Bretthauer, GCSAA's director of member/chapter services.

"If there's not a clear understanding of what you want volunteers to do, they could become frustrated," he adds. "The key is that volunteers end up gaining from their experiences—personally and professionally."

Success of a chapter association starts at the top. If it has a strong executive director or administrator, its board of directors is able to pursue important goals and not be bogged down in busy work and bureaucracy.

Case in point: the Carolinas GCSA and Chuck Borman. For about 25 years, the association employed a part-time executive director until it hired Borman as full-time executive director in 1995.

"There was a lot of controversy about hiring him because we knew we would have to pay him a good salary," Floyd says. "We didn't know what we'd get out of him."

It turned out to be a good move by the association. Borman, who left the Carolinas GCSA last year to become GCSAA's chief operating officer, helped the chapter grow in numbers and thrive professionally, Floyd says.

Cannon is another example that chapter

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