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Kirk Richmond, CGCS, at Crooked Stick Golf Club in Carmel, Indiana, joined the Brotherhood in 2006 and recently hosted to the 2009 US Senior Open. He visited with superintendent Russ Apple during his grow-in at The Pete Dye Course at French Lick to share management ideas. And while there is strength in numbers, it's more important to know that a familiar face just up the road uses the Penn bentgrasses too.

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Golfdom

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People of the Year

22 This year's honorees have no shortage of integrity and character.

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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Art Director Carrie Parkhill wrote in the sand, so to speak, to help illustrate the theme for our cover. Image by Eyewire.

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By Karl Danneberger



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This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest for turfgrass managers analyzes how rolling greens can help reduce dollar spot. Also, herbicide resistance among weeds is examined. See pages 55-60.

Online Exclusive



Listen to this podcast only at www.golfdom.com:

Topdressing Trends – Do you have a question about topdressing? Are you wondering what you should look for when buying a topdresser? Scott Kinkead, executive vice president of Turfco Manufacturing, answers these questions and more in this interview with *Golfdom* Editor in Chief Larry Aylward.

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■ LETTERS FROM THE FIELD

Point/Counterpoint Part 2: In Support of Certification

Editor's note: In the July *Golfdom*, the cover story featured a *Point/Counterpoint* article debate over the merits of the Golf Course Superintendent Association of America's certification process written by certified golf course superintendent Rafael Barajas and superintendent Christopher S. Gray Sr. We received several letters supporting Gray's point that certification isn't needed, which were printed in October. However, we didn't receive any letters in support of Barajas' point — that certification can benefit superintendents — until after the October letters were printed. Here are the letters we received in support of Barajas' point. They were edited for length.

After reading the letters regarding certification, I feel many of your readers are missing the point of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's certification program. It seems the perception is this program was implemented to provide an ego boost, and it creates an elitism that separates superintendents who are certified from those who aren't. While members can be proud of attaining certification, it certainly doesn't mean there aren't non-certified Class A and superintendent members who are equally competent at their jobs. I submit, though, that the purpose of the GCSAA certification program is an attempt at enhancing the image of the golf course superintendent as a professional by providing standards and qualifications that are comparable to those required in other recognized professions.

At one time or another, we've all been called "grass farmers" or have heard the comment that "there is nothing to being a superintendent." We've bristled at these labels. One of the reasons for this misperception is our industry has, until this program, never had any standards by which to measure our professionalism. Can you think of any other group that is considered a profession that doesn't have standards? That is what the GCSAA certification program is trying to promote.

One reader's letter in your October issue commented that "you advance yourself by your performance day after day and year after

year — not by a test and title given out by the GCSAA." I couldn't agree more. But we advance the image and professionalism of the superintendent by setting and attaining measurable standards. Certification

may not be something you as an individual are interested in attaining, but look beyond your individual situation at the big picture. We, as superintendents, have come a long way and programs such as this can do nothing but enhance our image as professionals.

**Steve Ravenkamp, Certified Golf Course Superintendent
Tenkiller Golf Club, Vian, Okla.**

There are many reasons superintendents become certified. For me, it was not done to acquire status but was done out of necessity. Due to several major changes in college before settling on studying agronomy, I ran out of college funding after 4.5 years and had to leave school. While I had accumulated many credits, I didn't have enough that counted toward a bachelor's degree in agronomy so I left school with an associate's degree in agronomy. But I noticed many openings for better jobs required applicants to have a bachelor's degree, and I felt I needed to become certified to get my foot in the door for the better jobs.

After becoming certified, I believe it helped me open some doors and get some interviews that I otherwise wouldn't have gotten, including for my current position. Becoming certified wasn't an easy process and took time, effort and money. As being certified wasn't a requirement at my previous position, I had to pay for the education and expenses.

Upon becoming certified, the board of directors at my previous position saw the value and began paying for my continuing education to maintain certification. The board also gave me a pay raise. My current position also doesn't require me to be certified, but my employers see the value and fully support and fund the continuing education needed to maintain my CGCS status.

Professional certification is not uncommon



and many professional associations and trade unions have some form of certification to acknowledge their members' continuing education and experience in their fields. Think about our employers: For the most part, they're successful

professionals or entrepreneurs, many of whom belong to professional associations or have done much continuing education themselves to advance their knowledge and skills.

**Chris Thuer, Certified Golf Course Superintendent
Bear Slide Golf Club, Cicero, Ind.**

The merits of certification were well stated by certified golf course superintendent Rafael Barajas. Regarding Christopher S. Gray Sr.'s counter position, I agree with his assessment that "certification doesn't, in any way, guarantee actual job performance success." This is an argument I often hear and I totally agree.

However, I must respectfully disagree with Gray when he states the certification program is "driving a wedge between membership classes." His implication that certification is a classification is incorrect. Certification isn't a membership category. Another assertion from Gray states that "many of the certified superintendents truly believe they're the elite of the association and that the GCSAA supports and encourages that belief." This implies that arrogance is rampant among certified superintendents. This comment disturbs me, and I'd vehemently debate the GCSAA doesn't condone that attitude among its members.

Certification is a personal choice. The program help you self-assess and identify competencies that can be improved. The program challenges you to become a better course manager.

The certification program is a curriculum our forefathers created more than 35 years ago and is constantly reviewed and modified by our peers. Gray's attacks, in my opinion, are directed at individuals and feelings and not the program in general. He missed the point.

**Bill Bieck, Certified Golf Course Superintendent
Heritage Hills Golf Course, McCook, Neb.**



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I was surprised when I first heard the Club Managers Association of America dropped the Golf Industry Show like a bad habit. But my shock only lasted for about two minutes.

Truth is, the marriage of CMAA's annual trade show with the GIS, which is dominated by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, was like that of country crooner Lyle Lovett and Hollywood starlet Julia Roberts in 1993. That relationship was so odd-ball, you just knew it wouldn't last. Hence, I see why the CMAA is ditching the GIS after only three years as a presenting partner.

In case you've been living under a ball washer, the CMAA said it's leaving the show because the GCSAA decided to dump New Orleans from the 2012 show schedule in favor of Las Vegas. The CMAA said the GCSAA made the decision in spite of an agreement that it wouldn't do so without consent from the CMAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association, the show's other presenting partner. The CMAA wouldn't concede because it said it had contractual commitments that would cost its members more than \$300,000 to break them. The GCSAA said it will save money in the long run by leaving New Orleans for Las Vegas. And besides, the association says many of its members and vendors don't want to go to New Orleans anymore.

But is this really about N'awlins and Sin City?

I was skeptical of the CMAA's role in the show from the beginning. When the CMAA joined the show, I was reminded of a girl I dated briefly in high school. I knew from the beginning I was out of my league. It took her a few months to realize the same.

The CMAA was out of its league at the GIS. It was also a fish out of water. Sorry, but the kitchen equipment exhibitors just don't fit in with the big-booth BASFs of the trade-show floor.

Let's face it: This is the GCSAA's show. It was the GCSAA's show before the NGCOA joined it in 2005 and the CMAA joined it in 2007, and it's the GCSAA's show now. The latter associations didn't merge with the GCSAA's Conference & Show. They joined it and the three of them changed the show's name.

As the Golf Industry Show World Turns

BY LARRY AYLWARD



WHY DID THE CMAA
REALLY DITCH THE
GCSAA AND THE BIG
SHOW?

This isn't to slight the NGCOA and the CMAA. It's just that the GCSAA brings much more to the show as far as attendees and revenue.

Interestingly, it seems more superintendents have been more willing to let the owners join their party than the club managers. Maybe it's that whole superintendent-club manager relationship thing. I realize that plenty of superintendents get along with their club managers and plenty of them don't. I don't hear many superintendents complain about their owners, though.

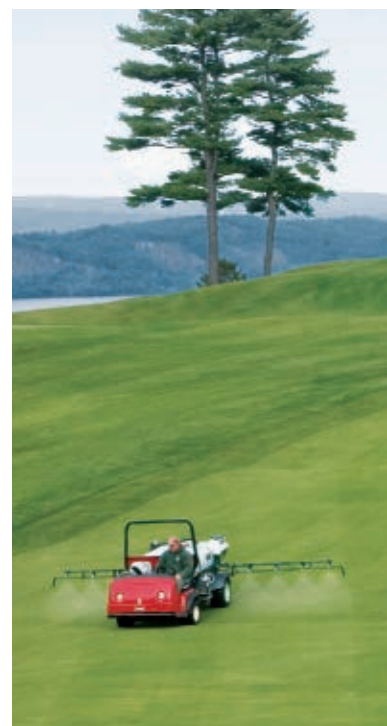
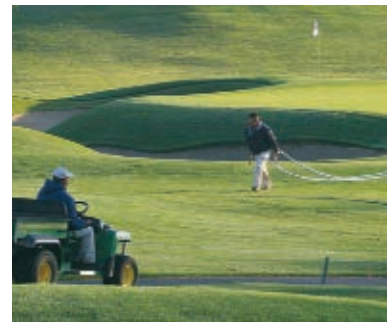
When it was announced in 2004 that the owners would join the GCSAA's show in 2005 to create the GIS, only 14 percent of about 200 superintendents told *Golfdom* in a survey they didn't like the idea. When it was announced in 2004 the club managers would join the show in 2007, a whopping 51 percent of about 300 superintendents told *Golfdom* in a survey they didn't like the idea.

The GCSAA-CMAA relationship didn't end amicably. Unbeknownst to the GCSAA, Michael Leemhuis, CMAA president, sent a letter to its members telling them the association was leaving the show. He also gave the impression the GCSAA had pressed the CMAA into doing so because of the N'awlins deal, which the GCSAA denies.

I have a few conspiracy theories about the ordeal, and I'll share one. I wonder if the CMAA wanted to leave the show and was looking for a good reason to do so. And when the GCSAA said it was bailing on N'awlins, the CMAA acted outraged and used the GCSAA's action as its reason to ditch the show.

It all makes for a good soap opera. Who needs the "Young and the Restless" when you have this?

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Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Golf Consumer Confidence Stabilizes

Golf consumer confidence tanked in 2008, but it has stabilized in 2009, according to the National Golf Foundation.

Golf consumer confidence was around 100 in March 2008 before dropping to about 87 in December 2008. It rose slightly in early 2009, before dropping slightly again in June. The number has stabilized at 87 for the past several months, and the NGF hopes confidence has bottomed out. The NGF says golf consumer confidence is a combination of sentiment for playing golf, buying equipment and going on golf trips.

Big Three Join Virtual Trade Show

In October, the Toro Co. became the first major partner of the golf industry's first Virtual Trade Show (VTS) to be staged by the International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA) in March. In November, John Deere became the second partner. Later in November, Jacobsen became the third major partner.

"This commitment demonstrates The Toro Co.'s leadership and continued support of the IGCEMA and its initiatives," said Stephen Tucker, the association's founder and virtual trade show developer. "John Deere has been a partner of the IGCEMA since our inception and has supported us in many different ways. We've been working with Jacobsen and Ransomes Jacobsen in the UK for many years now and they have supported us every step of the way. Partnering with us on the Virtual Trade Show really shows [the companies'] commitment to embracing new ideas and innovations and their willingness to continue supporting our efforts and it is much appreciated." ■



Currier Leaving Bethpage

Craig Currier is heading to the Glen Oaks Club.

POPULAR SUPERINTENDENT TAKES JOB AT PRIVATE CLUB ON LONG ISLAND

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Craig Currier is leaving Bethpage State Park, whose esteemed Black Course in Farmingdale, N.Y., was the site of this year's U.S. Open, for the Glen Oaks Club, a private course on Long Island. Currier told *Golfdom* on Nov. 13 that he accepted the job, which he's expected to begin this month.

Currier, one of the most recognized superintendents in the business, joined Bethpage in 1997 when he was 26. Currier made a name for himself and received much mainstream media attention when the restored Black Course hosted the 2002 U.S. Open. Currier and his crew

were also heralded for their work during the rain-soaked U.S. Open on Bethpage Black last June.

The 27-hole Glen Oaks Club, established in 2000, is located in Old Westbury, N.Y.

Currier was well-liked at Bethpage. Dave Catalano, director of Bethpage State Park, said Currier is one of a handful of prominent people who has contributed to "the involvement, success and reputation" of Bethpage during its history. "I feel that strongly about Craig," Catalano said.

At press time, Currier didn't want to comment at length about his new position until some loose ends had been tied up. ■