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Price and Pride

by Jim Latham

A Dues paying member of the American Society of Agronomy

My preacher brother-in-law once said he would never again minister to a congregation that had no debts. He had one once and got only apathy from the members - no interest or participation. This seems to be the situation golf course superintendents associations find themselves today.

The state of the art is high. Wages are good. Budgets are acceptable. Maybe we have gone as far as we can go. Therefore, there is no challenge, no improvement possible and we can sit on our butts and take it easy.

It wasn't always that way. Consider the GCSAA in 1926, a newly formed group of greenkeepers trying to shed their overalls and solve the vexing problems of satisfying the golfers of the day. From the outset, one of the goals was to help the younger men grow in the pro-

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fession. Not just with the written word, but also in conversations at meetings.

Whenever membership in the Golf Course Superintendents of America or the Wisconsin GCSA is mentioned the question is always asked: "What's in it for me?" Then: "It costs more than it's worth". Usually the next statement is: "I'm a successful golf course superintendent already". Okay, but how did you get there? Who laid the foundation for knowledge from which you are reaping the benefits?

The American Medical Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Agronomy members and others don't join for a gimme. They are members because it is expected that professionals continually try to improve themselves through continuing education. Basically, however, most feel that they owe something to the profession that provides their livelihood. A sort of professional mortgage that is repaid voluntarily.

It is ridiculous that of some 10,000 plus golf fac-

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ilities in the country, less than 6,000 golf course superintendents belong to local groups and just over 3,200 belong to the National. Are not the remainder also called superintendents? It seems that some folks are depending on the actives without any participation. Maybe they come cheaper.

But what is in a GCSAA membership for you? Consider:

- 1. The best executive staff the organization has ever had.
2. The best magazine the organization has ever had (and I've read most of them.)
3. A rapid employment opportunity listing that really works.
4. An educational division interested not only in the Annual Conference but also intensive training seminars that are of great developmental value.
5. Group insurance that is valuable to some, if not all members.
6. Very useful publications on timely matters such as OSHA, contracts, resumes, job interviews and information to hiring committees desiring help in obtaining a good superintendent. Add to this an excellent library service.

7. A certification program for super superintendents that will improve professional standards greatly and impress prospective employers by proven proficiency in the field.

There is more - just ask a GCSAA member.

Professional pride is intangible but a necessity, if an individual wants more from a job than payday. The organizations available to Wisconsin golf course superintendents mirror that pride - at a price. The \$100.00 total price for the two is worth it, regardless of who signs the check. If the employer will include dues as a fringe benefit, great. It seems to me, though, that a superintendent who is not proud enough to pay it anyway is not very proud of his profession.

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