



Editorial

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Monroe S. Miller

"What's in a name?" — an old question all of us have heard a hundred times in dozens of different contexts. I submit that there is a **lot** in a name, whether it is your own personal lifetime name, the name of your favorite book, or the name of your profession. Names are usually given for some very real and very definite reasons.

Not everyone would agree with me on the importance and significance of a name. Haven't you heard the old line, "I don't care what you call me, just don't call me late for dinner." I've got a friend who once said during a conversation on this topic, "I don't care what they call me as long as they pay me on time."

I have what is, at least, an uncommon first name. I could have been a natural target for a nickname. But I have jealously guarded myself over the years from such an imposition because I happen to like my given name and am extremely proud to carry my mother's maiden name as my first. Similarly, Cheryl and I carefully selected the names of our children. Names are important to me.

I am convinced that now is the time to change the name of my professional career. It's a simple change and an obvious choice. It won't take a Houdini to do it — we can. What I do in my daily professional working life is **manage** a golf course, so shouldn't I be called a Golf Course Manager? Absolutely yes. And so should you. Further, the GRASSROOTS should be the official publication of the

WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION.

At times I have been almost romantically intrigued with the old professional title of Greenkeeper. Actually, maybe the word is more of a job description. It is pleasant sounding and originated as a shortened version of "Keeper of the Green," where green meant the entire golf course. But you seldom hear it pronounced correctly and what usually comes forth is Greenkeeper. If I am the Greenskeeper at my Club, then who is the fairwaykeeper, and who is the Teekeeper? And what do you call the man who manages (there's that word again) the golf course staff? Who is the man with the financial responsibility of the golf course? Greenkeeper might be okay if everyone understood its meaning; but they don't, they never have, and they never will.

Look at the B.C. cartoon below — I clipped it from the comics over ten years ago. It aggravates me more now than it did then.

The other problem I have with the title "Greenkeeper" is that it sometimes is used in a subordinated sense and even at times with a contemptuous tone. It may be that the word accompanies, fairly or unfairly, a vision of a "good ol' boy" in dirty bib overalls digging a hole on the golf course. That vision is disgusting to me, reflects in no way my duties and is not fitting to any of you in any way whatsoever. Cancel Greenkeeper.

I've never quite been able to establish who and how the word "Superintendent" got into my job

title. The word "superintend" is not a verb in common usage — I don't **superintend** my family finances, I manage them. Bankers don't **superintend** their banks, they manage them. I don't **superintend** my golf course, I manage it. The word, over and over, is **M A N A G E**. I am a manager.

The CMAA and the clubhouse managers have already beat us to the punch. Notice: I think that most of them are **clubhouse** managers — they manage the clubhouse and have no knowledge or responsibility outside of the front door. "Club Manager" implies a position that most do not have — one that is superior to ours. In fact, many outside of our industry believe that a club manager manages what his name implies — the whole operation, which includes the golf course. Wrong, wrong, wrong. Their name implies that they are on turf that is mine. See what a name can do for you? Most only manage restaurant, bar and office, just like I manage the golf course, the building grounds and extensive equipment inventories. Many of you also manage tennis courts, swimming pools and golf car fleets.

We have a chance to clarify these situations. It is incredibly easy — let's call ourselves "Golf Course Managers" because that is exactly and precisely what we are. Why not? What would we be giving up in the name "Superintendent"? A little history and tradition? Maybe. But the gain — an accurate portrayal in a single word of what we do — is worth far more.

Gather your thoughts, please. You'll have an opportunity to express them at our next meeting. I am going to make a motion to change the name of our association to the "WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION." Sounds nice, doesn't it?

How will **you** vote?

