



## Editorial

# WHY NOT BOTH?

By Monroe S. Miller

The GCSAA is in the process of evaluating their scholarship and research program. That's all well and good, and I'm completely in favor of periodic reviews of any and all programs in which I participate. Since Bill Roberts is serving on the GCSAA Committee charged with this review, it was natural that he would bring it up at our last board meeting. The response of his inquiry from one of my fellow directors took me by surprise, however. I considered his view preposterous, but it precipitated a lot of thought on the subject, more than I've given it for years.

His premise was that the market place is full of college graduates; so many graduates, in fact, that their numbers may soon affect the ability of those of us who have been in this profession for a number of years to move freely in the business. He also expressed fear that these numbers may even impact on maintaining current positions. His solution, as you've probably guessed by now, is to eliminate the "scholarship" from the scholarship and research program. It is worse than preposterous. Such an action won't have any impact toward solving this problem.

Don't misunderstand. This is a friendly disagreement; although I feel strongly that he is wrong and that his logic is bent like a pretzel, many of the points of his argument are valid and need consideration and reflection from all of us. It is his solution that I disagree with. Denying a student a scholarship will not keep him out of our field of endeavor.

What's happening in our profession has already happened in many others. The scenario goes something like this: the word gets out that a particular career is exciting and offers wonderful opportunities; many college-bound youth select it as a major; the colleges and universities tune up to

turn out however many students desire that major, usually with little regard for the true needs of the marketplace. What results, whether it is teaching or engineering or golf course management, is that the career track ends up with about 90% of the stations closed. We are not facing a new or unique problem.

Those kids graduating from turf schools are facing a situation similar to that of Woody Allen, who said that earning college degrees hadn't gotten him the work he wanted, but at least he was now being turned down for dates by a better class of women! Actually, the result of overpopulation in our profession is underemployment — work is being done by college graduates which once was being done very capably by people without college training. It is happening on my own staff. Overeducation, indebtedness from college and underemployment **will not** be solved, however, by withdrawing a scholarship plan. Denying a student something less than \$10 per week probably won't go far in dissuading him from selecting golf course management as a college major, if that is what he wants to study.

Why? The answer is easy — jobs that may not require a degree to execute with success and competence nowadays require a degree just to **get**. And although college grads may be filling jobs once held by non-grads, they aren't automatically filling the spots once guaranteed by a degree. In all parts of our society there is more educational competition. I've read of one prediction that states there will be 2.5 college graduates competing for every "college" job in this year of 1985. Feeling a little less lonely, now?

Our profession responds like most others do. This "game" is called Defensive Education. Economist Lester Thurow

describes it this way: "As the supply of more highly educated labor increases, individuals find that they must improve their own education qualifications simply to defend their current position. If they do not go to college, others will and they will not find their current job open to them." Michael Harrington, author of the book *Decade of Decision*, calls this the "tiptoe syndrome." The people in the second row at a parade have to stand on tiptoe to see over the heads of those in the front row. Everyone behind them also stands on tiptoe just to stay in the same place. So it is with college. A degree doesn't guarantee that you'll get ahead; the lack of a degree may, however, decide who falls behind. The threshold to our profession is rising, and cancelling scholarships won't change that. The fact is, the situation is probably what is best for golf — the level of competence is rising and should be manifest in better managed golf courses.

I guess I understand how this situation can make some feel trapped and cynical and even furious. But the elimination of scholarships will not change or even salve the discontent and nervousness this problem is causing. We must continue to **encourage** scholarship, not to create more competition on an individual basis, but to carry on the upgrading and improvement of our profession. We must always want to count the best among our members, and college training can help toward that goal.

Pursuit of excellence, especially academic excellence, should be easy to sell to GCSAA and WGCSA members. A scholarship program that is fair and generous expresses that commitment. And the encouragement and honor attending a scholarship just might inspire a student to continue his education and someday fill the shoes of men like Jim Beard and Joe Vargas and Gayle Worf and Jim Love. We'll always need the kind of help they give us.

And, please, forget about the loud-mouthed jerk who boasts that he spent his scholarship money on a stereo (or a car or a vacation). Don't let the arrogance of such a fool deprive some worthy students of scholarship support.

A final thought: I do not pretend

or suggest that college education alone will be sufficient for success in my profession. Mark Twain's words seem appropoe: "I never let school interfere with my education." Preparation for golf course management requires heavy doses of on-the-job training. Vocational and practical experience are very important. I've heard myself many times, while shaking my head as I watch an employee, say: "Four years of college and that kid can't even drive a tractor." But let's not pretend that life will be better for everyone if we limit the number of students coming out of our turf management colleges. And let's also admit that withholding scholarships will probably hurt us in the end.

It has always been the GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund. Let's keep it that way.



## UW—MADISON TURFGRASS ALUMNI MEET

Graduates of Dr. Jim Love's Turfgrass Program at the University of Wisconsin — Madison gathered for an alumni meeting during the GCSAA Convention and Show in Washington, D.C. The meeting was held at the Sheraton-Washington Hotel on Sunday night, February 10th. Those in attendance included Roger Bell, Dave Beno, Bob Erdahl, Mike Handrich, Mark Keinert, Monroe Miller, Pat Norton, Jerry O'Donnell, Tom Parent, Jeff Parks, Tom Schwab, Mike Semler, Randy Smith and Jack Soderberg. Classes from 1963 to 1983 were represented, and wives and children were also present.

The evening wasn't limited to pleasant conversation and reminiscing; discussion on an expanded role of the group took place. A project to update a directory of all graduates since the program's beginning was established. Each and everyone in attendance is looking forward to the next meeting in San Francisco in 1986.

## MORE THOUGHTS ON "NAMES"

The editorial in the last issue of the GRASSROOTS that proposed a name change for our Association has sparked a lot of spirited discussion on the subject of "What's in a name?" The following piece comes from Jim Latham and is excerpted from the introduction of a relatively new book by the British author F. W. Hawtree entitled "The Golf Course: Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance."

*This book is first of all about golf course architecture. It begins with the writings of the earliest architects of golf courses because their books are not easily come by and the similarity of their philosophy and ours is of significance. Having mostly the same aims, their results were noticeably different but this is probably of less significance given the infinite variety of their sites and local variations in interpreting their instructions.*

*Their successors have written far less on the subject and, indeed, there comes an early limit to what can usefully be said about golf course architecture in general. This had led to the second aim of these pages. I have tried to expand the subject into specific sections which may be of wider use to those thousands of golfers who every year, after peacefully and anonymously enjoying their golf in the rank and file of members, allow themselves to be elected to the Green Committee. There are not many guide books to help them find their way through these byways of golf although there are almost too many advising them how to play it.*

*In Scotland, their leader will be called Green Convener — a neater, more musical term than Chairman of the Green Committee. It also emphasizes that the 'Green' referred to is the whole course not one of eighteen small parts of it. That distinction, regrettably, is lost in solecisms like 'Greens Chairman', 'Greens Committee' and, worst of all, 'Greens-Keeper'. This error by analogy is mostly found in lands where the greenkeeper has graduated to 'Course Superintendent,' 'Course Manager' and 'Curator'.*

*We have perhaps been backward in British greenkeeping in providing the intensive training, the degree courses and research which have produced so many talented golf course superintendents in the United States and elsewhere; but there has been an immense fund of solid experience handed down from which the profession in the British Isles has moved steadily forward. 'Greenkeeper' is still an honourable title. It might only be regretted that the term 'Clubmaster,' which became 'Steward' when it crossed the border, was not matched by 'Greenmaster' for the man who cared for the course.*

*The term 'Green Convener' will be used here out of deference to the Scots who invented the game of golf. We cannot thank them enough. But the Green Chairman (or, simply, Chairman) and the Green Committee will equally be present. 'Le President de la Commission du Parcours', 'der Præsident des Greenvorstandes', 'el Capitan del Campo', and their Committees are also invited to these meetings. They are all welcome.*

*The election of the Green Convener will reflect personal qualities, whether they be leadership, bonhomie or business acumen; or he may, unwisely, have talked himself into the job the frequent expression of strong views. Often it is a stepping stone to subsequent captaincy. Sometimes it derives from his principal occupation: a farmer will be expected to know about turf—an engineer, about machinery. I am not one who believes that the chairman of a specialist committee should necessarily be an expert on the subjects under review. An incisive, analytical mind will soon draw out, compare and balance the opinions of the experts assembled. But where the members of a committee are themselves equally new and unversed in the matters requiring decision, it seems to be desirable that its chairman should have some background knowledge to enable him to guide the discussion; and this will be still more fruitful if his committee has done some homework as well.*