



Roberts Responds to “The Sports Page”

Mr. Monroe S. Miller, Editor
The Grass Roots
3809 Patrick Henry Way
Middleton, WI 53562

Dear Monroe:

I'd like to take this opportunity to respond to a couple of suggestions and comments forwarded by Mr. Rob Schultz in the July-August, 1989 issue of *The Grass Roots*. The constructive concepts for improving the image of GCSAA collectively and the Golf Course Superintendent individually have, in fact, been either implemented or considered over the past several years.

For example, GCSAA has produced a variety of television and print ads over the past two years which include the central theme that “We Keep Golf Green”. While this theme may not have quite the exposure or impact of General Motors’ “Mr. Goodwrench” campaign, I believe it has had an effect in raising the level of awareness regarding the Superintendent’s critical role in the game of golf and we are continuing to look at ways to enhance that effort.

Golf Course Management magazine has experienced a subtle evolution over the past several years in terms of both content and presentation. With substantial input from the Communications/Awards Committee and the Technical Resource Advisory Committee, the magazine staff has been able to maintain the technical/educational integrity sought by a conscious consensus of the Board of Directors. The magazine addresses issues ranging from, yes, “turfgrass” and “pesticides” to golf course architecture, construction, financial and personnel management, purchasing, public relations and other business skills, environmental and governmental relations issues, safety and training, computers, irrigation, weather, tournaments, golf personalities and much more. In my opinion, this approach serves, not only the direct information of GCSAA’s 8,000 members but, also, helps to acquaint “GCM’s” 20,000 other readers with the issues that face today’s Golf Course Superintendent. The magazine is, in short, eminently successful and meets its educational and public relations goals.

Two years ago I chaired an informal internal study group that explored the possibility of publishing a second magazine aimed at the golfing public. It was decided that while the concept has some merit in terms of public relations value, at this point in time, GCSAA’s membership would be better served by continuing to direct those substantial resources that would be required for such a venture to-

wards the enhancement of existing programs and the establishment of new programs such as our government relations efforts.

Regarding Rob’s encounter with the “head of an extremely successful course operation who was looking for a new superintendent” it would seem to me the fact the “wag playing in a \$2 Nassau” could inform his playing partner about GCSAA may be precisely the point. It wasn’t too long ago that the “wag” would not have known of GCSAA or of the Golf Course Superintendent.

I think GCSAA knows about “golf and golf courses” and we are not only responding to the needs of the industry in the 20th century, but are positioning the Association to serve our members, and by logical extension, the game of golf in the 21st century. The success of the magazine speaks for itself. Participation in GCSAA’s educational opportunities is at an all-time high. Our annual Conference and Show experiences record attendance year after year. The Certification program becomes more exacting and more sought after at the same time. We are providing a credible leadership voice in the area of environmental affairs. We provide support and perspective in the research arena. The list goes on and on but I think the point is that Golf Course Superintendents are, increasingly, being recognized for the substantial contribution they have been making to the game of golf all along because we have raised educational levels through numerous avenues and we are addressing the issues central to golf.

Beyond that recognition however, is a deep appreciation and a professional respect for the Golf Course Superintendent by those who know the game and the industry. That appreciation and respect translates to an employment environment for Golf Course Superintendents that has never been better and, in my opinion, is a result of a collective effort by GCSAA’s membership through measured, focused programs and participation.

Monroe, thanks for the opportunity to respond to Mr. Schultz. We are always looking for substantive input and *The Grass Roots* has a terrific tradition for providing a forum for the discussion of such input.

Sincerely,

William R. Roberts, CGCS
Director, GCSAA