



## Two Editorials

By Monroe S. Miller

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This issue's feature might better be titled "Two Opinions From Across The Country" since they are editorial pieces.*

*And they do come from across the country!*

*Charlie Cross is the golf course superintendent at The Meadowbrook Club in Jericho, New York. He's also the editor of "The Hole Nine Yards", official publication of the Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association. It's a truly superb publication. I have discovered, as I've gotten to know him, that Charlie is an excellent editor and*

*golf course manager and a great guy. His editorial offers food for thought for a lot of WGCSA members.*

*Pat Finlen is the golf course superintendent at the Quivira Lake Country Club in Quivira Lake, Kansas. Pat is the relatively new editor "Heart Beat", the official publication of the Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents Association. Pat succeeds long time "Heart Beat" editor Dave Fearis and is doing a terrific job.*

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## It's All in Our Title By Pat Finlen

Much has been done in the past few years to increase the professional status of the golf course superintendent. We have certification, television and radio ads, charitable work, and the list goes on. But it seems that we overlook one critical area, and that is our name, golf course superintendent.

How many times have you been asked what you do for a living and your obvious answer is, "golf course superintendent?" If the inquirer is not a golfer, his first reply is, "So, you're a golf pro." After much explanation, you finally get across to the individual what you really do. But by then, he's most likely associated the word superintendent with someone who is a caretaker.

If he is a golfer, his reply is, "So, you're the greenskeeper." Either way, your image is not all that flattering. The word superintendent portrays very little professionalism, and it is synonymous with "building superintendent," "construction superintendent" and "public works superintendent."

Among non-golfers, our image is virtually zero. In fact, it is negative because of all the chemicals we use. Among golfers, we are the ones who work in the shack off the fifth fairway. Again, what great credibility! We seem to be fighting a losing battle with our introduction when we use the word superintendent. Our counterparts in the golf business are changing rapidly.

Golf pros are now becoming Directors of Golf. Club managers are becoming General Managers. But where are we? We're still superintendents in the shack off the fifth fairway.

I remember an article that once said our office should be side-by-side with the club manager's office and the golf pro's office. That way, our status would be clearly seen. No longer would we be seen as Carl from "Caddy Shack." That would be nice, but not very practical. One better way to increase our image and professionalism would be to drop the word superintendent from our titles.

Many superintendents have done just that. They are the Golf Course Manager, the Golf Course and Grounds Manager, the Director of Golf Course Maintenance and, even, the Director of Golf. Our responsibilities are much more than caretakers, and that is what the word superintendent refers to.

Our jobs encompass much more than taking care of the golf course. We are environmental stewards. We manage thousands of dollars on any given day. We are much more accountable for the profitability of a facility than the pro or club manager. But our title puts us at the bottom of the list. Maybe the time has come for a change to a more progressive title than "superintendent."

## Fifty and Out

By Charlie Cross

The golf course superintendents profession has changed dramatically over the past twenty years. Once known as "grass cutters" or "greenskeepers" the golf course superintendent is now viewed as an educated professional who plays a vital role in the success of any golf operation. Educational programs offered by local golf course superintendent chapters and by GCSAA are readily available. These educational programs play a major role in helping the golf course superintendent continue his education; he is abreast of changes, innovations and trends in golf course maintenance.

A trend that bothers me is that once a golf course superintendent reaches the age of fifty he has to start looking over his shoulder to see who is nipping at his heels. Many times what the inexperienced green chairman wants done on the golf course is to satisfy himself while giving no thought to what has been going on for twenty years. These two occurrences go hand in hand.

A golf course superintendent who is 50 years old has years of experience to offer his club. That's a wealth of knowledge. When it comes to golf course maintenance there is no substitute for experience. None!

If the golf course superintendent is neglecting his duties, then it doesn't matter what age he is. He should lose his job. Clubs that use excuses such as "we're on a youth movement", or "we need some new blood", or "our experienced golf course superintendent's salary is too high" are in most cases being unrealistic. What can be done to avoid the so called "Fifty and Out" situation that affects golf course superintendents?

From a club standpoint, education budgets should be adequate. Funds for national and regional conference attendance (there are numerous educational programs available at the conferences) should be available to the golf course superintendent. Funding for local and national superintendents associations memberships should also be made available. The education line in a golf course maintenance budget is the single most important line on the budget. There will be a good return on the investment.

*(Continued on page 17)*