



In Bounds: MGCSA Benefits

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Two weeks ago I had an interesting conversation with an industry friend of mine. We were talking about the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association and he piped in, "yeh sure, but what have you guys done for me recently?"

Left speechless (*something sort of new for me*) I composed myself, took a deep breath and said I would get back to him later. Today is later and here is my response.

Straight from the play book, the objective of the MGCSA is to advance the art and science of Golf Course Management, to collect and disseminate among member superintendents practical solutions to problems with a view to more efficient and economical maintenance and production of golf courses, and to promote the welfare of the Superintendent and the profession. All for a 'C' note. Not too bad, but the mission statement only scratches the surface.

Education, education and more education is perhaps the greatest thrust of the MGCSA. Every year the Education Chairman scouts high and low to find stimulating and current information regarding the state of our industry for four sessions: The March Mini, Spring and Fall Mixers and the extended big show, The Green Expo. This is not an easy task. Competition for the presenters is fierce. Coordinating the topics and procuring the professional speakers takes lots of volunteer time. That's right, the investment the Education Chair puts into your education is done for free.

Sometimes the speakers are total flops. Even the "institutions" in our industry can give a dry program or be off for that day. But we go anyway and hope to glean a small bit of information. Most of the time however, the educational sessions are conducted by upbeat professionals and provide the attendees with ample information, that is if they are attentive and participate through active listening. Maybe a little less gabbing and distracting side conversations would improve the experience for all participants, in my humble opinion of course.

I also opine that there isn't a better state publication generated on a volunteer basis than the Minnesota Hole Notes. This publication takes time and

effort to generate pertinent ideas worthy of a very professional and demanding readership. During a time when the dues structure of the MGCSA has not flinched, the *Hole Notes* has gone from a black and white publication perused at one's leisure to a must-read color rag full of relevance, facts and fun. Articles written by your peers and professionals in the industry, and articles full of experiences which could be used to collaborate your own ideas or stimulate new theories and methods of turf management. It is a good read

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and alone worth membership in the MGCSA.

Another valuable asset of belonging to our organization is the chance to play golf at some of the finest tracks in the area. But somebody has to organize these events for your enjoyment. Somebody has to locate the venues. Somebody has to contact the associates who own cart fleets to transport the participants at little or no cost. Somebody has to promote the event. And somebody has to decide the distribution of the proceeds. That somebody is the Arrangements Chairman and again, his is a volunteer position.

Without the Arrangements Chairman, the Scholarship Chair and the Research Chair would have a tough time doing their volunteer jobs. These two association positions are dedicated to the generation and distribution of funds accumulated through golf tournaments and voluntary membership contributions. No small tasks as there are many individuals who are entitled to apply for the scholarship funds and even more requests for research funding.

Another avenue of interest is the Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation, the warehouse for research funding monies generated from the Minnesota Green Expo. The MGCSA has two repre-

sentatives on that Board to be sure our voice is heard. The volunteers work on various committees to direct funding accordingly, participate in the recruitment of presenters at the Green Expo and stream lining of the relatively new organization.

One more novel benefit of belonging to the MGCSA is the active representation of the Superintendents Association at the Legislative level. It wasn't too long ago that golf courses were not on the radar of the "powers in the Big House." But in recent environmental awareness, water regulations and even industry standards came to the forefront. In an effort to keep abreast of the ever-changing regulations the Legislative Committee was formed to represent and educate both the public representatives and the green industry as to proper turf management practices.

This volunteer position is manned annually by a dedicated chairman who spends many hours actively lobbying the legislature about key trade issues and their impact upon our business. Topics such as low voltage electrical power, fertilizer impacts, worker safety concerns and water cleanliness have become hot agendas and the MGCSA representatives have been there to discuss the cause and effects of legislation. On some issues we have been overruled, on other topics our presence has been witnessed and we have

changed the course of actions that would be detrimental to our industry.

The Environmental Chair, another voluntary job, is actively recreating a CD providing updated information about our impact on the macro and micro aspects of our small corner of the world. Public awareness has demanded that we create a "paper trail" of projects intended to educate our industry so we are not blindsided by accusations of a disconnect with our surroundings.

So my friend, have I connected with you regarding just how important our association is? I know your kids will be going to college and may be hoping for a little help -- that's why there are industry scholarships available. Perhaps some day you might use the employment services provided by the MGCSA website, and maybe you will pick up your directory and call a buddy to discuss agronomy, the weather or club politics. And here is one idea right from left field, conceivably you too might volunteer to run for the Board and participate beyond sending in your annual dues. I know it's a long shot, but you have all the qualities of becoming the next great participant.

By then I will have retired my slot on the BOD and can ask you, "So what have YOU done for me recently?"