

MAAGCS News

The Assistant Superintendent

Drew Scully, CGCS

While my first President's column is an issue away I wanted to write about something which is very important to me and which has been integral to both my personal and professional success, the Assistant Superintendent. I was moved to write this because there are two hundred five Class A & B members in this Association, and seventy six Class C. The Class C, the Assistant Superintendent, it is unbelievable to me, seventy six, thirty seven percent of the Class A & B membership.

My first Assistant's job at Herndon Golf Course under the lovable, but quite frugal John Tutich was my first exposure to Associations. We played in Greater Washington events and hosted their annual picnic, we attended the MTC show in Baltimore, the MAAGCS picnics at Hobbit's Glen and Bretton Woods. Notice it was always the free events as the course didn't pay at the time, but the point is that he took me to those events and showed me the bigger picture and introduced me to many of the people I still work with today. My next Assistant's job at Cattail Creek CC during construction and grow-in exposed me to both the MAAGCS & GCSAA, and the club paid for everything. There were three of us, Kevin Pryseski the superintendent, Steve Lutz the other assistant, and myself toiled away for three years and polished off the occasional case of MGD along the way. Both are important part of my success and lifelong friends. Kevin made us understand that you have to keep learning, there is no stopping point on that trip until you are done working or succeeding.

My first and actually only superintendent's position, so far, gave me the opportunity to follow through on what I had been exposed to and help my assistant Mark Menusan reach the superintendent level successfully, and

his work and my peers helped elevate me to my current position. Now I have been exposed to several fine assistant superintendents who have worked for our organization and moved on for other positions or continue to work with us today.

While I've condensed fourteen years into two paragraphs and cannot mention everyone by name who I've worked for and with, the assistant experience was essential for me on both sides of the position. Now I'm a realist as well and realize that many clubs, courses, management companies have trimmed the Assistant from the budget, (see my buddy Paul Masimore if you ever need a dose of reality on this subject, or any other for that matter) much like drainage is often cut from construction projects. It is easy, always wrong, and the results always show up long after the decision maker has moved out. There are also the people who don't want to have assistants for various reasons and I'll leave them alone because they are stressed out enough, they just don't know it.

I often hear that assistants no longer want to pay their dues, that's a fact about our population not our business. Successful managers adapt their management styles, not cave in or settle but adapt, so look to build a relationship that will add value to their career and they will respond. Exposing assistants, if you are lucky enough to have them, to the MAAGCS and GCSAA will reapvalue to their career and they will respond. Exposing assistants, if you are lucky enough to have them, to the MAAGCS and GCSAA will reap benefits for everyone. If you are unfortunate to only have a one hundred thousand dollar operating budget, the one hundred five dollar assistant membership cost would be .001 %, and two fifty dollar meetings a year another .001%. Everyone would benefit and value is added to the position.

As I stated at the annual meeting I think the importance of the assistant superintendent needs to be revisited and the Board of Directors will be focusing on ways to facilitate their involvement. Our first golf meeting of the year in April will be a Superintendent/Assistant event combined with an exciting tournament sponsored by BASF for the superintendents. It will be the MAAGCS' first visit to Waverly Woods Golf Course, a great Arthur Hills designed course in Howard County, MD. Mike Huey, long time MAAGCS member as both an assistant and now the superintendent will be our host. So as you plan for 2005 consider bringing your assistant into the Association, to a couple of meetings, seventy six is not a good number unless you're playing the game.

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This past year the Mid Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents allocated funds for our annual scholarship program. This scholarship fund was established to support deserving students in their goal of completing golf course management studies at local universities.

At our annual MAAGCS meeting on December 14, 2004, we recognized six students who excelled both academically and within the workplace. Among our scholarship award recipients were Mark Allman from the University of Maryland Golf Course, Ted Blauvelt from the Chevy Chase Club, Chris Fauble from Holly Hills Country Club, and Andrew Harrison from the Turf Valley Resort and Conference Center.

Richard Leshin from Bethesda Country Club and Dan Wildeman from Congressional Country Club received "Merit Scholar" recognition for achieving the highest scholastic rank within their respective programs. Rich will be completing his undergraduate work under Dr. Carroll in 2006 and Dan is finishing his Golf Course Management certificate program under Dr. Mathias.

On behalf of the Mid Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents we want to congratulate all of these fine students for their outstanding accomplishments. Good luck guys!

Bryan McFerren,
Education Chairman, MAAGCS