

THE WHY AND WHEREFORE OF CERTIFICATION FOR THE GCSAA

By Walter Boysen, Supt. Sequoyah C. C.

After several years of study and evaluation by a succession of Executive Committees of the GCSAA, Director Clifford Wagoner and Past President Walter Boysen were named by President John Spodnik to head a special committee to develop a tentative certification plan. The committee was comprised of recognized leaders in GCSAA affairs and represented all areas of our membership.

The results of three questionnaires were compiled and a tentative program prepared. Final form of the program for presentation to the Executive Committee was accomplished by a physical two-day meeting attended by nine members representing all sections of the country, and by Executive Director Ben Chlevin. This meeting was held in Chicago December 13-14, 1969.

The following excerpts from a communication to Robert Mitchell, Secty-Treas., from Walter R. Boysen explain to some degree the need for, and the development of, the program:

Certification, as it relates to the GCSAA, very simply means that the Association stands ready to accredit its members as qualified to build and/or maintain a golf course in an acceptable manner. A member would be qualified, in the eyes of the GCSAA, after successfully meeting certain specified standards of golf course work as determined by completion of educational requisites and experience.

A golf course superintendent needs certification for reasons similar to those that encouraged related associations to adopt a form of certification—the PGA and the CMA. Ego-building by way of certification may appeal to a few, but it is certainly not an important aspect of the program. The superintendent needs certification to afford a sense of stability and purpose to his chosen profession. Employers need, and in some cases are insisting upon, some standard by which they may determine the competence of a man before they entrust their costly facility to him.

Those who are doing a fine job and perhaps could not meet educational requirements, or pass a test may be qualified under an experience stipulation. A modified "grandfather clause" in the program is being considered. Beyond this possibility is the fact that a member may feel quite secure in his job and would elect not to try for certification. He would still retain his "A" classification, or whatever he holds. The proposed plan is entirely voluntary for the present. In the future, however, when attrition takes its toll, certification can easily and desirably be made mandatory.

Certification can protect a superintendent's job to the degree that his competence would be less in question, and the reasons for his possible dismissal may evolve around other considerations not related to his ability to properly maintain a golf course.

One thing that is bound to happen under certification is that chapters will necessarily upgrade their entire business framework. Accurate records will have to be maintained. Chapters will assume a much more important role in their relationship with educational facilities.

For many years many of the members of the GCSAA—particularly the younger ones—have been clamoring for more educational opportunities in their field of

endeavor. Since the proposed certification is based to a large degree on the education of our people, it will provide a stimulus for greater accomplishments by the individual. It provides a **GOAL** for him to achieve. An educational program without the reward of achievement (certification) would very likely not get off the ground. Providing an educational atmosphere with the reward of recognized level of achievement is one of the greatest values of certification. The newly created post of Educational Director is a natural and necessary development, and probably wasn't originally considered in the light of a certification program. However, he would probably be devoting most of his time and talent in this area.

The proposed program promises to be flexible enough to adjust to most conditions, and to satisfy most of our members. It is realized that it is not a final edition. Adjustments can be made as necessary. On the basis of information on the experience of similar types of procedures, the cost will be within the means of the GCSAA.

CERTIFICATION FOR THE GCSAA MEMBER—it is bound to happen sometime—WHY NOT NOW?



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