

Why Change the GCSAA Bylaws?

by Mike Bavier



There was some thought, on my part, to just let the new bylaws slide by without expressing my opinion. However, after hearing from a number of my friends from around the country, I have decided to express my thoughts on this matter.

As many of you know during my presidency of GCSAA, proposed bylaws were brought to the membership and were over-ridden. This could very well be the case, again, this coming year. The membership should question any and all changes. Especially, changes that are announced in the Golf Course Management Magazine, which seems to be very one sided. Do you really believe they (the staff — or the Board of Directors) could not find at least one member that would question these proposed bylaws. Those of you that read the article in this magazine, understand how they have tried to mesmerize us. If the Association is able to put out information like this unchallenged now, it makes one wonder what our voice will be in the future. Bob Williams, the enterprising President of the GCSAA in the late 50's, a number of times has said to me, "is the tail wagging the dog?"

During my term as President, we tried to change the bylaws to give the Board the power to set the fee for dues. That bylaw proposal was defeated, with only a small percentage of delegates in favor of the change. The bylaw change did not occur, and probably was for the better. Even if you trust people running the Association at present, what about future Boards? The more power you give a governing body, the less power we have in our own hands. We support the Association with our dues, which is only a small percentage of the Association's budget. Most of us realize this already. The golf courses with the most purchasing power, are the main support of the Association. Just think of that statement for a moment. We, the superintendents of these golf courses, are the ones the Association needs to really make the whole organization work.

Let the Board of Directors come to the delegates and explain their futuristic ideas. Then give the delegates the opportunity to give their ideas in return. This might be called **accountability**. Will you have that with your one vote? **NOT!!** Just maybe the next statement will be, "**read my lips — no more increases in dues**".

The one vote is another issue. We have that one vote in our local chapters. This, you might say, is our electoral college. The chapter delegates are typically your most interested people in your local chapter, usually responsible and dedicated. Have they failed us in the past? My opinion is, they have done a fine job.

Are they telling us that the Directors on the Board are incompetent? Some of us might question the directors thinking, but we also realize they are doing a good job, (remember they are part time administrators). The delegate method of voting has worked in the past, and would probably continue to work in the future. Some of the fiber of our Association, again I repeat, "**Our Association**", is the camaraderie that has developed between delegates — this is what makes an association something you want to be a member of now, and hopefully in the future. The GCSAA Golf Tournament is another good example of "association fiber". Reflect back, and remember, the conferences that you were most involved with, were probably the ones that you had the best time at, and enjoyed the most. The hospitality rooms are also another piece of fiber. Will all this be eliminated by the new election process? These fibers are all part of the "Association Fabric", that we currently enjoy.

CHANGE IS IMPORTANT — We all know that. Keep the two-thirds vote to amend the bylaws, and let the directors do their job selling their ideas to the membership, instead of mandating them.

The delegates should start meeting at the conference to discuss the future of the association and make suggestions in the form of motions to the GCSAA Board. This was done in the past, and should be considered again. The Past Presidents Council (that was started by Bob Williams and functioned as an advisory group), was recently dissolved by the Board of Directors. The Council still exists but meets merely as a social group. The delegates and the Past Presidents Council should also be included in the decision making process. Remember — Bill Roberts said, "any feat of decision-making being concentrated in the hands of too few is unfounded. The membership retains final authority over direction of association affairs through the election process."

IN YOUR DREAMS!!!

The purpose for which the Association was formed was "**to provide for and enhance the recognition of the golf course superintendent as a professional**". As "professionals," we need to take a close look at the proposed bylaws, make a competent decision, and then proceed with caution.

In spite of some difficult problems over the years, the Association has had many accomplishments. If you would like to discuss any of this, give me a call at (708) 358-7030 and let's talk, otherwise, **SEE YOU ALL IN ANAHEIM.**

Editor's Note: Be sure to read Palmer Maple's comments on page four.

"Fall's Spree"

When Sand Traps become Leaf Traps, November's here.

Still beautiful Floral Colors rate a cheer.

There is no way to keep them hanging on the Tree,

Fall will have It's way, Fall's Autumn Spree.

Thanksgiving with Family and Friends, enjoy it all,

It's those beautiful Leaves that make Fall, Fall.

Kenneth R. Zanzig