

A Win-Win Proposition: Extending Midwest Membership to Our Assistants

Every year, the MAGCS Membership Committee starts anew and comes together to discuss issues pertaining to membership. How many members are there? What constituencies are represented? What are the benefits of belonging to the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents? How can we get more to join and reap the benefits of our Association?

While having this discussion, the Membership Committee honed in on one statistic that seemed glaring. Currently, the MAGCS has 284 class A/B (superintendent) members. Yet we count only 122 class C (assistant superintendent) members. Why aren't these two numbers closer together? What are the benefits of assistants belonging to the MAGCS? How does having an assistant participating benefit the superintendent?

Why do we have so many more superintendent members than assistant members?

The real answer is, we don't know for sure.

It could be for financial reasons. Sometimes a company or club does not provide this benefit. If so, maybe the assistant does not feel he or she can afford the dues. We believe that the benefits of membership, which will be discussed later, are an asset to the assistant's professional career that far outweigh the cost. Keep in mind, too, that it is not necessary to have dual membership in GCSAA for class C members of MAGCS.

Our biggest fear is that an individual superintendent does not know how an assistant's membership benefits not only that assistant, but also him or herself. If you as a superintendent fall into that category, think about all that you get out of membership in an organization that has come together for the purposes of fellowship, learning, sharing ideas and advancing the profession.

What are the benefits of belonging to the MAGCS?

The Association confers many benefits upon its members, such as:

1. Continuing Education

We believe that education is vital in our ever-changing field. Furthermore, it is imperative to talk and discuss new ideas, techniques and products with our peers. On an ongoing basis, the Association provides a diverse array of educational opportunities. One of our most-frequented avenues of education is at our monthly meetings. These meetings feature invited speakers who discuss new and innovative ideas and techniques in the area of turf management. In the off-season, the MAGCS sponsors seminars and conferences pertaining to our industry as well. Further education is not only important for you, the superintendents. Encouraging your assistants to learn more can only help them be better at their jobs.

2. Leadership Opportunities/Committees

A newly created committee in the Midwest is the Class C Advisory Council. It comprises assistant superintendents who are willing to participate and have their bosses' approval to do so. This group of individuals fulfills several important functions for the MAGCS. First, via their Council chair who acts as

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liaison to the Board, they represent the assistants of the Midwest. Second, the class C group takes on special projects as appointed by the Executive Board and Board of Directors. Both in giving a voice to the class C constituency and by planning and implementing various tasks, members of the Council gain valuable experience in leadership and management.

Another great way for assistants to get involved with MAGCS is by writing articles for our monthly magazine, *On Course*. Completing an article can be a beneficial learning experience for the assistant and is meaningful to our readers. Assistants are a largely untapped source of viewpoints and ideas that would be beneficial to our membership. Superintendents, please encourage assistants to join the Association and start writing. The article does not have to be about turf but can focus on safety, travel, hobbies, a unique experience or anything else that is interesting. If you as an assistant would like to write, but need some guidance on topics, please contact the

Editorial Committee chairperson, Scott Witte.

Finally, the Midwest sponsors many committees that pertain to all aspects of the Association. Most of these committees would encourage assistants' participation. Again, assistants could provide a needed and different perspective on how we do things and make our Association better for all.

3. Social/Golf Outings

It just so happens that a number of our members partake in golf at monthly meetings, during the temperate season obviously. These golf events provide a great opportunity to play at the many beautiful courses around Chicago. They also give assistants a chance to meet other members and exchange ideas. Also, assistants attending golf meetings will be included in the assembly itself and whatever refreshments—usually lunch—that are offered.

Towards the end of the golf season, the MAGCS holds an outing where the proceeds go for the college scholarships given out annu-

ally. These scholarships go to children or grandchildren of members and are need- and merit-based. Since the Class C Advisory Council has assumed ownership of managing this event, it also serves as the class C golf championship.

In November/December each year, we take time to appreciate what we have and to thank the people behind us. No, not the people on the course, the ones at home. Behind a great superintendent or assistant is often a wonderful, very patient spouse. So one weekend night, we invite all members and their spouses/significant others to enjoy a nice formal dinner-dance at that year's host club. This is a small way to enjoy each other's company and give all the chance to get to know the people who are with us in our great profession.

4. Career Development

How does the MAGCS promote career development? When we asked other superintendents this question, we got many responses but one idea was clear: opportunities

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never cease. Remember when you, the superintendent, started in the profession? You wanted to learn all you could and set goals for yourself and your career. Your assistant feels the same way.

With a limited number of golf courses and many people vying for those head positions, self-promotion and betterment is imperative. Every year, we invite all members to attend the assistants' workshop. This is where a professional career-planner provides good ideas on how to prepare and present for a superintendent interview and offers other career-building advice.

To get that interview for the superintendent position, assistants must know about prospective superintendent openings. A service that the MAGCS provides to its members is the Employment Referral Service (ERS). Once an opening is posted online at www.magscs.org, it is up to you, the assistant, to get your resumé to that employer and hopefully earn that interview. Furthermore, most members of the Association are more than willing to provide any help or advice that might be beneficial in your career. We want to see our profession thrive and flourish for years to come.

Assistants who strive to better themselves through career development will be an ever-improving asset to your organization while you help guide them to the next level.

How does having my assistant belong to the MAGCS benefit me, the superintendent?

One mission for the MAGCS is to give our membership all of the tools necessary to achieve success. Aren't these tools the same for superintendents and assistants? **They are!** In today's economy, career development, leadership and educational development are never-ending.

Think of this from the most selfish perspective. Whether you are a superintendent or an assistant, you need to make sure you are equipped with all of the tools necessary for success. By providing these tools to your assistants, you make them better trained and more motivated employees in the process. This makes your job easier! Our goal is to provide that for all our members.

Finally, a call-out to all superintendents—if your assistant is not currently part of the MAGCS, please sit down with him or her and discuss the benefits of membership. Ask your assistant to join. Not only will they appreciate the invitation, so will you.



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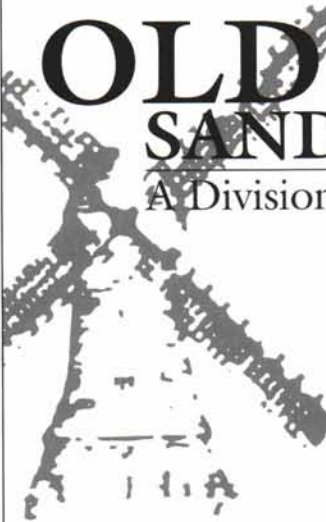
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