

Pyramid Bermudagrass

very early positive outcomes before the opening gavel was even struck. First and foremost was the naming of turfgrass as one of the eight commodity groups of concern. Turfgrass joined such groups as Animals, Field Crops, Fruit Crops, Vegetable Crops, Environmental Horticulture, Forestry, and the group of Aquaculture, Fisheries and Wildlife.

There were 18 breakout groups from these eight major commodity groups. The turfgrass group included: Drs. John Cisar, Barry Brecke, John Haydu, Jerry Sartain, George Snyder, Everett Emimo, Terril Nell and Bryan Unruh from IFAS. Industry representatives included Ray Carruthers, Sod Growers Association; Greg Tolle, Lawn Maintenance Association; Don Benham, Florida Turfgrass Association; Mark Jarrell, FTGA/FGCSA; and Joel Jackson, FGCSA.

The turf group discussed issues ranging from public awareness and education to timely technology transfer from researcher to end user. We talked about

grass varieties and the need for breeding to pursue more drought- and pest-resistant strains to meet the growing restrictions on chemical use and water availability.

We also talked about facilities and infrastructure of IFAS including the continual process of training new students and hiring faculty that can meet the needs of the turfgrass industry.

It was an eye-opening experience to see and hear the concerns and needs of the various commodities. It gave one a clearer sense of perspective of the mission of IFAS at Florida's land grant University serving a population that is 80 percent urban while 80 percent of the land is in under cultivation or in its natural state. I had a chance to chat with Dr. Mike Martin, the new vice president of IFAS and he is no stranger to the golf industry. His son works on a golf course and he was very aware of the Minnesota GCSA when he was at the University of Minnesota.

In the accompanying sidebar, I have

provided the executive summary of the Turfgrass Base Paper which the turfgrass used to kick-start our discussions. There are some familiar themes and some new thoughts to challenge you as you think about the future of the turfgrass industry in Florida.

JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

FGCSA Director of Communications

GCSAA PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

National Committee Service Broadens One's Perspective

Spring is the time for GCSAA committee Meetings. As soon as staff gets back from the International Conference and Show they have just enough time to clear their desks, return calls, follow up on contacts from the conference and show and then prepare agendas and working papers for nearly two months of continuous committee meetings.

I was asked to serve on the publications committee for the second year in a row and



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went to Lawrence this past May to participate. It is always a pleasure to go to our national headquarters for several reasons. Lawrence is a nice college town to visit. Staff is eager to visit with us and hear our input on procedures and problem solving. The various committee members get to hear an update on what's going on and act as additional communication links back to our state and local members.

Steve Mona gave us a "State of the Association" presentation outlining and highlighting progress on current board of directors mandates and the general health of the operation. Mona predicted we may hit 20,000 members by this July if the current membership trends continue. He talked about the "image" campaign going on currently. Ads and inserts in leading golf publications aimed at the general golfing public have garnered good reviews from rank-and-file golfers and other industry leaders. While the content may seem a bit whimsical for practical-minded superintendents, keep in mind that the message is meant for those folks who play golf in flowered shirts and striped pants!

Joe O'Brien did double duty. He gave us a look at the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) also known as Membership Standards. O'Brien took us through the time line from 1996 to the present to show how the program has been researched and discussed and hammered out along the way, with critical inspections at the last two chapter delegates meetings.

This is not something that is coming out of the blue. Nothing is in concrete and the details are still being studied and discussed by committees and the Board of

Directors. The purpose is to formulate a meaningful Class A "brand" that will be a highly respected and marketable designation of professional accomplishment. Certified status will be an additional embellishment on top of the new Class A requirements.

O'Brien then acted as facilitator for the rest of our publication committee business. He does such a masterful job. It is always such a positive learning experience to participate in one of his sessions.

The committee addressed a variety of issues including the mission and role of *Golf Course Management* magazine, *Newsline*, and *Leaderboard*. We expressed our concerns over the size and readability of the magazine with emphasis on the length of the articles and the placement of advertising to help the story flow.

We agreed that the magazine is of excellent quality and content and the issues we were focusing on rated a 2 on a scale of 1-10.

The biggest discussion came on how the *Leaderboard* publication might be better utilized as a tool to reach influential golfers and we even suggested that the name might be changed to reflect that audience. By reducing the amount of the complimentary copies of GCM, which is already underutilized by the members, the committee suggested those resources be put into upgrading the *Leaderboard/Influential Golfer* newsletter into a classier publication.

The recent debut of *Golfdom* and *Superintendent News* as competition for GCM was discussed, but the committee felt that the design and content still offered readers

a variety of choices. The challenge for all of the publications is to convince advertisers that their publication is the one they should choose.

With consideration of advertising, the committee felt that GCSAA should do a better job of explaining that the magazine is the second-leading revenue producer behind the conference and show and that money goes to pay for many of the services and research being conducted to enhance the superintendents' profession. Like I said before, we're a practical lot and we like to be shown the nuts and bolts sometimes.

One other comment: Time after time, as we debated issues or ideas, we would stop and check ourselves and look at the whole spectrum of members from small public courses to the mega complexes. We tried to make sure we were representing the needs and concerns of everyone from coast to coast and border to border. I would encourage every member to fill out a committee interest form and send it in. The experience is worth the investment of your time. It gives you a chance to give a little of yourself and not just your money to a worthy cause, your life's work.

JOEL JACKSON, CGCS
GCSAA Publications Committee

Editor's note: For those of you that don't have a retirement plan with your club, look for the ad for "Golf Retirement Plus" located elsewhere in this issue. GCSAA has joined with the PGA of America and the Club Managers Association of America to provide this opportunity for GCSAA members. Check it out.

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