

Members disagree on easing entrance into GCSAA

BY PETER BLAIS

Another battle is brewing over the future membership of the GCSAA.

Members will vote on proposed bylaw amendments to change membership classification requirements and add membership classes, including non-superintendents, during January's annual meeting at the annual conference and show.

While most members say they would welcome newcomers, some feel GCSAA could begin to lose its identity as a superintendents association if too many non-superintendents join.

Membership committees have recommended opening the association to golf course staff members, technicians, owners, golf officials, regulators and others.

Those groups would benefit from the additional educational opportunities GCSAA can provide, association President Bill Roberts wrote in September's *Golf Course Management*.

Setting new membership classes and variable dues rates would also help attract superintendents from smaller, lower-budget clubs that are presently under-represented compared to higher-budget, private courses,

Roberts noted.

GCSAA would benefit from a larger membership in terms of added professionalism, extra dues and political clout.

"Numbers speak in Washington and elsewhere in the government," Roberts wrote.

Mike Bavier, head superintendent at Hinsdale (Ill.) Golf Club, said he is not opposed to opening the association to other professionals.

"I am reluctant to see the majority of our membership be something other than golf course superintendents because we are eager to increase our stature by

having a large membership and dues base," he wrote in a letter to the editor.

"If this is allowed to occur, it will only be a matter of time before these *lesser* members begin demanding more services and, inevitably, a voice in the management of what is also their association."

Palmer Maples Jr. of Summit Chase Country Club in Snellville, Ga., in the Georgia GCSA publication *Through the Green*, wrote: "The question is, are we going to stay a superintendent group or are we going to become a golf course maintenance association.

As a superintendent, I would like my dues to go for superintendent-type projects and education." Former GCSAA President (1971-72) Richard Blake added: "We should be a superintendents association. It is already open in many respects. There are seminars for mechanics and spray technicians, for instance. A lot of this [training for non-superintendents] is already handled on the local [regional chapter] level.

Show Time '93

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Former president warns of power held by the few

BY PETER BLAIS

The last GCSAA president to be nominated and elected from the floor of the annual meeting has misgivings about the proposed bylaw changes.

"They concentrate power in the hands of too few people," said Richard Blake, who headed the organization in 1971-72.

The proposed amendment eliminating the delegate voting system in favor of a one-person-one-vote format would require members to mail in their votes for or be present at the annual meeting to elect officers or amend bylaws.

Since so few members attend the annual meeting, opponents argue, that would make it virtually impossible for someone to follow Blake's path of being nominated and elected from the floor.

Blake agrees.

"If members are dissatisfied [with their choices for officers] or they want to make changes, that should be their prerogative," Blake said.

"I prefer the delegate system. If they [individual members] don't want to go along with their delegates, members are still free to vote any way they want."

Blake said he opposes the amendment allowing the board of directors to set dues.

"It's more democratic to let members do it. Besides, they have always supported any increase requests in the past," he said.

And he favors keeping the two-thirds vote of the membership requirement to change a bylaw rather than the proposed amendment to a simple majority rules.

"More people have to be involved in the decision that way [with the two-thirds requirement]," he said.

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