



President's Message

ASSOCIATION DEFINED

By Bill Roberts

Every once in a great while it becomes necessary for me to go back to the source when attempting to define a challenge or an opportunity, a situation or a setting. With the assumption of a new role as President of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association (and with a very persistent newsletter Editor with deadlines to meet), one takes on certain duties and may begin to view things from a different perspective. A re-definition may be called for relative to our Association, at least for me.

To digress for a moment, one of those new duties I have been entrusted with is the contribution of a "President's Message" in each issue of our outstanding publication, "THE GRASS ROOTS." This responsibility does not equate to nor imply any sort of monopoly on wisdom or insight but, rather, is a result of the office. The column space allows a certain "free forum" for the discussion of what may be the priorities of thoughts and ideas of the incumbent. In short, an inherent opportunity to say what one feels, believes or is being convinced of, in writing, and with virtually no limitations.

With a re-definition and my new role in mind (and with that newsletter Editor on the phone again), I have decided to wax philosophically on the age-old questions of "What is the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association doing for me?"

I could give you all the standard answers. Excellent educational opportunities at monthly meetings. An outstanding golf turf management event at our annual WGCSA

symposium. An informative and timely publication in "THE GRASS ROOTS." Support of two outstanding turf research organizations, the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and the O.J. Noer Foundation, which produce direct, tangible and applicable results for turf. Access to some of Wisconsin's great golf courses. A membership directory which can provide contact with fellow Golf Course Superintendents, industry people and research people. Standard answers.

However, I believe the real answer to this question may lie in the definition of an "association" itself. Going back to the source, in this case Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, I found that, in part, "an association is an **organization of persons** having a **common interest**." I judged that to be sufficiently vague and pursued explanation of what I believe to be the operative (and **underlined**) words. In no particular order, I would offer the following as a set of parameters in order to define our "association" and what it "does for me."

1. **Organization** — defined as "an administrative and functional structure." WGCSA has such a structure. Officers, Directors and committee members all contribute to the planning and implementation of procedures and policies which are necessary to insure a smooth operation.

For example, meeting notices go out, registrations are taken, golf is played, prizes are awarded, dinner is served, guest speakers expound, questions are asked and answered, raffle prizes are awarded and everyone goes home having gained. That process did not just occur. It was planned and implemented.

Likewise, other areas such as Publicity, Scholarship and Research, our History and Membership are covered through such organization. A structure is present, direction is set and pursued and the chaos is held to a minimum.

2. **Interest** — "a feeling that accompanies or causes special attention to an object or class of objects" according to Webster. Our professional attention is

focused on our common goal (object). We desire to contribute to the management of the finest golf turf possible, be recognized for that effort and to be rewarded appropriately. Whether Golf Course Superintendent, Turf Supplier or researcher we all concentrate on that encompassing goal. This mutual objective is enhanced through interaction at meetings, over the telephone, through our newsletter, et cetera as we strive for excellence in our respective positions.

3. **Persons** — "individuals" quite simply. The tie that breeds the interest into the organization. Without the efforts of "individuals" such as Paul Brockhausen, John Bone, Lester Verhaalen, Frank Musbach, Ray Mertens, Bill Sell, Bob Musbach, Al Vrana, Wayne Otto, and Woody Voight we may have had the interest but not the organization to put the interest into action. Jim Belfield has enough interest to serve the organization for eleven years. Danny Quast, who began a proud tradition with our newsletter and Monroe Miller, who has enriched that tradition while leading this organization at the same time have the interest. Past and current Board members, committee members, host superintendents, and individuals all have the interest. All share the same interest.

The individuals I have mentioned, and many I have missed, all had and have the foresight to see our "common interest" enhanced through an organization. Their reward was, and is, their contribution and, I suspect, that chance to contribute was, and is, what the Association really did for them.

The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association offers many benefits. However, "what it really does for me" is that it provides me the opportunity to participate, to share, to question, to answer, to pursue and to grow with any number of individuals, who choosing to do likewise, help me, in an orderly, directed fashion, to achieve my, and our, goals.

In short, WGCSA does exactly what you do for it. Get involved, stay involved and enjoy the rewards.