



WGCSA SUMMER MEETING FORMAT DOESN'T PASS MUSTER WITH SOME

By Monroe S. Miller

When I was an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I once had the occasion to attend a summer meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. It was a great experience, one I haven't forgotten.

The meeting format was comfortable. Members came to the host golf course for lunch. A business meeting was conducted. A speaker was a key part of the program.

Following the educational presentation, the assembled WGCSA members adjourned to the golf course for a tour. It included a discussion of fertilizer and disease control and overall management objectives. Budgets were discussed. The irrigation system and pump station were demonstrated; the shop was inspected.

After all questions were answered and the conversation dwindled, they went back to their vehicles for the trip home.

My guess is they were all home in time for supper. It seemed all had a very good time and certainly they learned something from the meeting. I didn't hear any one of them gripe about not being able to play golf.

Fast forward now to the summer of 1993. You're at a WGCSA monthly meeting. Ask: "Why do members attend these summer meetings?"

The answer is clear—to play golf. There is no educational offering at all.

Pretty sad, if you ask me.

Oh, I know some will say, "I learned a lot visiting with my partner."

That may or may not be true, but it is a tough sell for me. It is a stretch to take an entire day away from my own golf course to lunch and tromp around someone else's. A day off is a day off. It is even tougher to imagine doing so on the company's or club's expense account.

It has become a nearly impossible sell for me now that we are even paying green fees. That's a whole other issue (and outrage) that merits a lot of discussion. We have had that discussion, by the way, and clear decisions were made. They are now being violated, as near as I can tell.

The 1993 policy implies that "the summer meetings are for golf players only. Non-players or busy superintendents without a day to waste are, practically speaking, excluded. If you aren't playing golf at a summer meeting, there is not a solitary reason to attend. That is sad commentary.

I cannot help but think that during June, July and August the WGCSA is simply a social club. The policy says that. It is disappointing to me that our association, during the summer months, is reduced to golf only.

Gosh, my brain still functions during those months. I always enjoyed hearing a good speaker at those meetings. It actually is stimulating to hear lec-

tures during the golf season when the educational menu has less items on it than during the off season.

While I was interviewing Wayne Otto for **The Wisconsin Golf Course Survey** (found elsewhere in this issue) he reflected on the times when the WGCSA meetings were only educational. He said to me, "I often think we've gone too far the other way."

I agree, and so do a surprising number of others I have visited with about this issue. The experiment of the summer of 1993 should end as that—an experiment. Any thoughts of continuing it next year should be buried and forgotten.

I support myself by providing services to people who enjoy the game of golf, and heaven forbid the day we forget that. Cheers to those who play well enough to enjoy the game. But remember, you can have an educational program AND golf at the same meeting. Everyone is provided a reason to attend one of the summer meetings.

Our overriding purpose for belonging to the WGCSA, indeed the very reason the association was organized in 1930, is for education. When we gather at the exclusion of that goal, we lose sight of the real intent of the group.

The meeting format tried this summer just doesn't pass muster. Let it go. ♣

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