



GCSAA

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September 8, 1995

Mr. Monroe S. Miller
Editor and Publisher
THE GRASS ROOTS
Blackhawk Country Club
P.O. Box 5129
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Monroe,

Your "MYOB" editorial in the September/October GRASS ROOTS was a big disappointment to us. You have always worked as a watchdog for GCSAA, and we understand and truly appreciate that. This time, though, you are crying "Wolf".

Every organization needs a good watchdog; someone who always studies important information carefully every time, someone who gets the facts straight. We are stunned to think that, during the past two years these issues have been under discussion, this could be the first time you have given more than 30 seconds to the topic before "trashing it." We know how committed you are to GCSAA, to your chapter and to your profession, so we would have expected you to have followed this closely.

This has been a bottoms-up discussion from the beginning. At the first Chapter Delegates Meeting two years ago, the nature of the relationship between GCSAA and affiliated chapters was clearly the heart of the discussions. Then-President Randy Nichols appointed a resource committee to start sorting out the issues.

Neither that group, last year's committee, nor this year's committee has been composed of "schemers." Not counting the four board members, they are 11 individuals from large and small chapters, from border to border, from coast to coast. All are conscientious and principled men. We believe we are setting a direction and pace and an ultimate goal that will make GCSAA, all affiliated chapters, and the entire profession stronger. We also are listening carefully to the issues raised at the delegates meetings and at chapter meetings we attend.

More than 70 chapter representatives participated in very frank discussions about these issues at last year's meeting in Lawrence. Since then, the committee has had two meetings, whose fruit will be on the table for representatives of 95 chapters this weekend. There are no surprises or hidden agendas here. Everything has been—and will be—openly discussed.

The entire area of chapter relations has been at the forefront of everything for years now, and it has nothing whatsoever to do with the PGA of America or any other organization. This is part of what GCSAA is. We were born of chapters. We cannot just "forget it."

GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession and enriching the quality of golf and its environment.

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GCSAA-chapter relations is an issue of at least as great magnitude as image and the environment. That is why the board made "serving members through chapters" one of our three mandates. We are just one the developmental up-ramp for many new exciting programs that will benefit chapters. We strongly believe that the relationship between GCSAA and chapters is a two-way street. We are not where we want to be, but we are making progress. For example, our new Government Relations Counsel is putting together programs to help chapters deal with state and local issues. Just today, the GCSAA Research Committee is reviewing a very large proposal to support research at the University of Wisconsin.

The board set the chapter mandate in response to bottoms-up discussion. So far the board's only involvement in the proposed affiliation agreement has been that four board members (all GCSAA members for 20+ years) serve on the Chapter Relations Committee. The full board does receive progress reports at each board meeting. However, we will not debate the issue until we have the majority recommendations from this weekend's meeting.

We must clearly state, though, that the GCSAA Board of Directors has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that litigation against a chapter cannot fall back on GCSAA Affiliation, after all, is a legal relationship. Whatever else happens with the proposal, we do know that we must require our legal affiliates to maintain adequate insurance and practice fiscal responsibility. We cannot jeopardize the association for one or all of the 114 organizations with which we are legal affiliated. If an organization is tied to GCSAA by legal affiliation, these matters are GCSAA business. If an organization is no affiliated, these matters are not of GCSAA's business and of no interest to us whatsoever.

As a chapter historian, you are certainly aware that Wisconsin GCSA is one of the 13 "Charter Chapters" specified in Article IV, Section 1 of GCSAA's bylaws. As such, Wisconsin has been protected by bylaws from the terms of the current affiliation agreement. That protection would continue under any proposed affiliation agreement, too, unless and until the bylaws were amended. That possibility has never been a subject of discussion at any resource group, committee or delegates meeting yet. Of course, if the Wisconsin GCSA were to choose to secede from its union with GCSAA, that would be its own choice.

As for GCSAA's other 101 affiliated chapters, the proposed affiliation agreement's reporting requirements are largely like the current affiliation agreement's - only the current agreement has never been enforced.

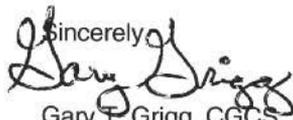
As to your point that all GCSAA members should also be chapter members, we personally (and everyone on the Chapter Relations Committee) agree whole-heartedly that this should be a two-way street. However, the current GCSAA bylaws do not allow that kind of imposition of a qualification. That is one bylaws change that has been under our committee's discussion. However, we would not be able to pursue that until we get our GCSAA-chapter relationships more solid and unified.

The 100-percent requirement for chapter superintendents to be GCSAA members would be a goal set over a 15-year period. The committee is looking to head back to that original charter. The board, of course, has not met or voted on any of this yet, but will certainly respect the majority of the 95 chapters' delegates at this weekend's meeting.

Our belief, which we both have heard many members around the country echo, is that the chapter members who are not joining GCSAA are riding on our coattails. They receive much as much benefit from our image and environmental campaigns, for example, as every dues-paying GCSAA member. We hear a lot of grumbling in our travels about the people who are willing to take, but not to contribute.

We are glad you have always been one to contribute, Monroe. GCSAA needs you "tough love." We are glad that you want solidarity and unity. That is exactly what the last few years of discussion have been aiming at. We hope you will care enough to study the issues more. As always, you may just pick up the phone and call either one of us.

As the GCSAA Board of Directors, we cannot "forget it."

Sincerely,

Gary T. Grigg, CGCS
President


Bruce R. Williams, CGCS
Vice President
Chapter Relations Committee Chairman

GTG:cjh

cc: GCSAA Board of Directors
Wisconsin GCSA Board of Directors
GCSAA Chapter Relations Committee