



MEMO TO: GCSAA
FROM: Monroe S. Miller
RE: Chapter Affiliation Requirements
MYOB

Late in June a fairly innocuous piece of GCSAA correspondence arrived in my mail. *CHAPTER NETWORK NEWS* would normally have occupied a 30 second review before it hit the trash can. This one, however, had a front page title that caught my eye—*Proposed Affiliation Changes*. It piqued my curiosity, so I read it carefully.

My blood is still boiling. It seems somebody in Lawrence, Kansas thinks the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association is so desperate to be "affiliated" with the GCSAA that we will subordinate our organization to theirs, at the sacrifice of our independence. Fat chance. Actually, no chance. Zero, none.

I've known we were an affiliated chapter for a long time. In fact, as chapter historian I have reported in past issues of *THE GRASS ROOTS* that on July 14, 1935 our chapter was the second in the country to declare affiliation with what was at that time the National Association of Greenkeepers of America. To me, being affiliated merely meant our chapter supported the GCSAA. We received little or nothing in return.

Here is what GCSAA will now offer for "affiliation":

- 1. Delegate representation at annual or special meetings. Big deal.
- 2. Use of affiliated chapter logo—another big deal.
- 3. Cooperative programs—non-existent today, as near as I can tell, and not detailed for the future.

4. Executive staff benefits—since we have no paid executive staff, this is worthless to our Wisconsin chapter.

"And what," you might fairly ask, "do we have to do to receive these underwhelming benefits?"

1. Give the GCSAA an annual report of our finances. If this wasn't so outrageous, it would be laughable. For an organization with a history and track record of the GCSAA in fiscal prudence and judgment and responsibility to expect to review our money matters takes enormous gall. How we handle

our business affairs is of no interest to GCSAA and simply none of their business. In fact, they'd do well to run a ship as tight and efficient as ours.

2. A majority of our officers and directors have to be GCSAA members. Excuse me, but we choose our chapter officials on the basis of their leadership ability, commitment, professionalism, past involvement in the chapter and a host of other things. I doubt we will ever require membership in anything—Boy Scouts, the Lutheran Church, the Republican Party, the VFW or GCSAA—as a requisite.

3. Worst of all, in five-year intervals, affiliation requires we go from 51% to 100% membership in the GCSAA. Tyranny! That means all superintendent and assistant superintendent members of our Wisconsin chapter would have to belong to the GCSAA before they could join their own state chapter.

This requirement is the most absurd. It reeks of greed and arrogance. As if we would exclude any Wisconsin golf course superintendent or assistant from our chapter educational offerings, our meetings, the *GRASS ROOTS*, job assistance and the scores of other advantages just because they chose not to join GCSAA. Or couldn't afford it.

Membership in GCSAA will always be an individual decision and NOT a condition of membership in our state chapter.


Truth is, if they were to be requirements, they should be just the reverse: you cannot join GCSAA unless you already belong to a state chapter.

There are numerous other nickel and dime requirements that don't amount to much. My objection to these affiliation requirements lies in the above three items.

The schemers of this inane proposal are really out of touch. We are in a time when companies are downsizing. Citizens are sick and tired of local, state and federal bureaucrats and bureaucracies intruding into their lives; that is what recent elections have been about. We want less government, not more. Less intrusion, not more. Lower taxes, less interference and fewer rules.

There are reasons for the widespread cynicism of today, and GCSAA is not immune from it. The organization has enough to do without nosing into chapter business, unless invited. No one on the staff or in leadership positions is any smarter than we are. Staff haven't even been golf course superintendents or members of state chapters. We have members in our state chapter who have been GCSAA members longer than most or all of the GCSAA officers and directors. So, tell me, where is the expertise coming from?

I look at our chapter and I see a progressive, active, forward-thinking and responsible organization. We give
(Continued on page 55)

TORO 3000		TORO 3000
	Golf Course Hydroinjection	
	Bill McMillan	
	<i>Serving Central Wisconsin</i>	
2 MACHINES PER COURSE	800490 TURF	DAY OR NIGHT

(Continued from page 53)

scholarships to UW-Madison turf students. We give formidable amounts of money to turfgrass research at the NOER Turfgrass Research Facility. We helped build the NOER Turfgrass Research Facility. We've run the Symposium for decades, absolutely one of the finest turfgrass educational offerings anywhere. We have an award-winning chapter publication. We gave the GCSAA \$10,000 for the University of Iowa cancer study. We have donated substantially to the TIF library at Michigan State University. The list could go on and on.

And, gee whiz, we did it all by ourselves, without any help from Lawrence. I'll bet we can continue on for years to come, with no more advice than we are getting now. And without affiliation, if need be.

In fact, the one time we asked for some help—the Town of Casey pre-emption issue that went to the U.S. Supreme Court—our request was met by GCSAA with a deaf ear.

Beyond these initial affiliation requirements—reporting, membership quotas,

et. al.—any fool can predict the next one: chapter dues payable to GCSAA. I prefer we continue to use our financial resources at our collective discretion. GCSAA has plenty of money.

If the stick to force affiliation is the meager list of offerings noted, then the stick is a feather.

Do not misunderstand. I am a long time—23 years—and loyal, faithful and altogether supportive GCSAA member. I have served on lots of committees, attended scores of seminars and attended 23 consecutive conferences. My GCSAA membership has been valuable and worthwhile, and I wouldn't think of not belonging. I recommend membership to all golf course superintendents. Every single one can benefit from membership.

But I am not arrogant enough to tell anybody they HAVE to belong. "I hope you do," I say, "but it is your choice." It would be very rewarding for those of us who are GCSAA members to see our chapter colleagues all decide to join us in the national organization. But they have to decide. Coercion just isn't our style. Never has been; never will be.

Those of us who choose to be GCSAA members will be members in full, regardless of chapter status. So why compromise our principles? If we want or need help for our chapter, we will ask for it. So far, since 1930, we have done real well. And I see no disaster looming on our state chapter's horizon.

The way to increase GCSAA membership is not by some strong arm tactic, but rather by making that membership desirable, valuable and important to every golf course superintendent. Do that and individuals will join. Let that be the initiative, not some requirement "because that's what the PGA does."

Our independence and our autonomy should be too important and too valuable to give these silly proposals serious consideration or even a second thought. The benefits of affiliation are negligible; the cost is too high.

I believe in unity and solidarity. These affiliation proposals, however, are likely to lead to alienation; they are divisive when the goal should be inclusion.

Forget it. 🌱

Spending too much time in the rough?



**Hanley's of Sun Prairie
will get you back on
the course fast with
the Cushman 6150
Wing Rotary Mower.**

The Cushman 6150 can mow at 7 m.p.h. with 1, 2, or 3 decks. It can cut up to 7 acres per hour with up to 10' 7" cutting width. Zero turning and fold up wings gives it maneuverability. It offers four wheel drive performance, and is easy to operate and service. The 14 m.p.h. transport speed will get you on and off the job fast.

Get in and out of the rough fast - Call Hanley's.

Hanley

Power Equipment & Turf Sales
641 W. Main Street • Sun Prairie, WI 53590
(608) 837-5111 • (608) 257-7815
Toll Free 1-800-279-1422


CUSHMAN
Driven to be the best.