



Where Did Catalyst For Affiliation Requirements Come From?

By Monroe S. Miller

Despite some effort by a few of the officers and directors of the GCSAA to convince members that stiffened affiliation requirements are something "we" asked for, I am not convinced that there has been a widespread call for the disruption it will cause and the unfairness that will result if such requirements are accepted. In fact, I know there has not been a hue and cry for such.

I haven't missed very many Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendent meetings in the past quarter century. In the last twenty years, NOT ONCE has the subject of dual membership requirement with the GCSAA been brought up at a member meeting. That doesn't sound like a ground swell of support, from Wisconsin at least.

Once, more than twenty years ago, at a WGCSA membership meeting at West Bend CC, the subject of forcing GCSAA membership on WGCSA members was suggested by a couple of individuals. I don't even remember who they were. What I do remember, however, is the overwhelming, overpowering outrage from the rest of the membership at the suggestion of forcing state chapter members to purchase a GCSAA membership even if individuals didn't want to or couldn't afford it. I recall speaking my piece,

offering the same arguments against the policy I offer now; things like fairness and a sense of what is right don't change. It was clear there was no sympathy, except from the two who brought it up, from Wisconsin golf course superintendents for forcing their colleagues to join another organization. Such decisions are a personal choice.

So, in the intervening twenty years, no one has suggested such a chapter policy. I have not heard even casual conversation about how great requiring national membership would be. Those who wanted to belong to GCSAA and felt it was important to them, people like me, joined. Those who felt differently did not. But all of us valued our WGCSA membership.

The Wisconsin GCSA has been extremely generous in its support of GCSAA. A goodly percentage of our members are national members. We have sent boat loads of chapter money to Lawrence, never missing a year. When we have been unusually prosperous, our gifts to Lawrence have been unusually generous. How many chapters, for example, were Platinum Tee Club members before us? Not many. We have sponsored seminars (despite GCSAA's decision to stop sharing profits). We involve them in our GRASS ROOTS, serve on

committees and actively support them on every front. GCSAA should look at Wisconsin as a shining example of what a state chapter can do and should be.

But no one in our chapter has suggested that we improve our "citizenship" by forcing dual membership.

That begs the question in the title - "where is the inspiration for affiliation requirements coming from?" It isn't a grass roots movement. Is it a staff person in Lawrence or a group of them who want to grow a money tree through dual membership? Is it an officer or two or a director or two? Is it a handful of members from one of the few chapters, usually made of big clubs or big cities, who do force dual membership?

I don't know. I have suspicions, but they are no more than that. What I do know is that this is not inspired by the rank and file members in state chapters.

If the subject hasn't been talked at a member meeting for two decades, I cannot imagine why our Wisconsin chapter will vote to exclude some of our colleagues.

It would be inconsistent and make no sense. And it would be wrong. We will have our chance to formally decide in March. ♣



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