

# GCSAA Business

By **Al Jansen**, Golf Course Superintendent, Baraboo Country Club

What is the GCSAA? From what I have gathered over the last five years as a member, it is a business. A \$20 million enterprise that professes to follow the philosophy of those 60 greenkeepers who met at Sylvania Country Club in 1926. They pledged to build an association to educate and inform its membership and to strive for the betterment of greenkeepers' future.

Nearly two years later the society of greenkeepers declared itself to be a non-profit enterprise where the signers placed into law their Articles of Incorporation. They also professed to provide for and enhance the recognition of the superintendent, to advance the art of greenkeeping and the science of turfgrass management, and to collect and disseminate information concerning efficient and economical management of golf courses and related environments.

These fine men, in their exuberance to fulfill the needs of the superintendent of the day, followed their mission to the tee. To them, dissemination was a literal term for their activities: to spread widely, throughout the growing association, information regarding the technology and scientific advancement being made by researchers and fellow superintendents; to provide information on new and advanced greenkeeping and cultivating equipment; and to promote advancement in the careers of all those who made a living at the art of golf course maintenance.

Today, the GCSAA's mission has been clouded by big business by increasing dollars and increasing diversity. In their exuberance to join the elite organizations like the PGA and the USGA, the GCSAA has turned more toward providing golf with another force, rather than providing for the needs of its members. They are more focused on giving the industry information on its membership than they are on giving their members information on the industry. The CEO of the association has now been named "one of the top movers and shakers in the industry."

So what is being moved and shaken? Why, it's the role this association is trying to play in the golf business, not the role the association is playing in the lives of its members.

The Professional Development Initiative (PDI) is just another example of the new philosophy the GCSAA has adopted: to provide the industry with a stimpenter to measure the GCSAA member and to determine which of them will roll farther in the fast-paced future of greenkeeping and course management. Those not measuring up to the new standard will be forced out of their class and must now take a back seat to all those willing to sign

on to this new philosophy. Those members, who in their own right have proven themselves to employers and players, will no longer be judged by their performance but by how they measure up to the next guy.

Now, the mission of the GCSAA should read, "The GCSAA, in our attempt to play with the big boys, provides for and enhances the industry by showing the differences in our members; improves the art of greenkeeping by making sure that each member complies with our standards regardless of their circumstances; and collects and disseminates background information on our members so that employers will have a clear choice who will be better at economically and efficiently managing golf courses and the surrounding environment."

What do we want as members? What do we need from our association? Is our association more interested in its role in golf or its role in the lives of its members? You decide by your vote. ♣



## Tournament<sup>TM</sup> Golf Course Accessories



Featuring Quality Custom Embroidered Flags, Poles, Cups, Bunker Rakes, Ball Washers & More.

LESCO is the exclusive distributor for



**SOUTHERN**  
GOLF PRODUCTS

Contact your LESCO Professional Golf Representative or call (800) 321-5325.



**LESCO<sup>®</sup>**

LESCO is a registered trademark of LESCO, Inc. Tournament and Grow With Us are trademarks of LESCO, Inc. Southern is a trademark of Southern Golf Products, Inc.