

Career Assistance for Assistants

By Jake Schneider, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

A group of thirty assistants from around the state gathered at Whispering Springs Golf Club in Fond du Lac for the third annual WGCSA Assistant Superintendents' Seminar. The late-January meeting featured speakers from around the country who offered their insights on successful career development in an extremely competitive job market.

Greg Wojick, the founder and president of Connecticut-based Playbooks for Golf, started off the seminar by discussing industry and employment trends. With diverse agronomic and business experience that includes both course consultations and conducting searches for superintendents and assistant superintendents, Greg's unique perspective resonated strongly with the audience. One of his more interesting predictions was that assistants will be increasingly long-term employees with higher compensation packages.

One audience member who certainly didn't need any advice for a long, successful career was the second speaker, Jerry Kershasky. As many of you know, Jerry is the long-time superintendent at Westmoor Country Club. Much of Jerry's talk focused on developing networks with membership, co-workers, and other industry professionals. Besides outstanding agronomics, he credited the relationships within these networks for aiding his tenure at Westmoor. Jerry's assistant, Bryan Bergner, also shared his perspectives on developing positive work-related relationships and dis-

cussed some of the methods in which he was able to keep the membership informed during the recent renovation at Westmoor.

The final speaker, Steve Randall, GCSAA chapter liaison, spoke of the merits of achieving certification. Most in the audience expressed their desire to achieve CGCS certification, and Steve outlined ways to make this possible. Before becoming superintendents, assistants can begin building their certification portfolios by simply documenting relevant job tasks that they already perform.

Also during the meeting, the very first WGCSA Assistant Superintendent Committee was introduced, and this year's members include co-chairs Chad Harrington (WGCSA vice-president) and Kevin Knoblauch (Milwaukee CC assistant), Bryan Bergner (Westmoor CC assistant), Tim Schmidt (Butte des Morts CC assistant), Jake Schneider (Blackhawk CC assistant), and Joe Sell (Whistling Straits assistant). This committee was formally established at the Fall Business Meeting at the WGCSA Symposium, and the committee is already busy working on a summer educational event designed specifically for assistants.

Special thanks for a very worthwhile event go out to the organizing committee, the outstanding speakers, and the gracious host at Whispering Springs, Matt Schmitz.



WGCSA Assistant Superintendent Committee

Jake Schneider, Kevin Knoblauch, Chad Harrington, Tim Schmidt, Bryan Bergner.
(Joe Sell is not pictured)