

Serving Membership Is Primary Goal of MGCSA Office

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Variety of Programs, Projects Pursued to Build Association

By Ralph Turtinen

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For members of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association, the impersonal numbers listed above represent:

A) The address to which they send responses to association requests or dues payments or *Hole Notes* articles or other information;

B) The association's telephone numbers;

C) The fax number.

But behind those numbers are living, breathing, dedicated people who seek to do everything they possibly can to provide a quality, personalized service to all MGCSA members.

For nearly five years the association office has been located in Suite 212 of the Justice Building at 240 Minnetonka Ave. South in Wayzata, a block north of Lake Street which borders the northern shore of Lake Minnetonka.

It's where Scott Turtinen, the MGCSA's executive director; his brother, Jeff, and Scott's wife, Laurie, implement the policies and programs of the association's board of directors who, in turn, are responsible to those superintendents who elected them — the members of the MGCSA.

Whether it's preparing and distributing important announcements or listing job openings or producing *Hole Notes* or organizing material for a monthly meeting or coordinating information for the MGCSA roster or the association's annual conference or following up on a myriad of duties or requests, this office, indeed, is a busy place.

"And, says Scott Turtinen, "this effort always is channeled in one primary direction — to serve our membership."

Basically, the primary objectives of the MGCSA are to:

- Advance the art and science of Golf Course Management;

- Collect and disseminate among member Superintendents practical solutions to problems with a view toward more efficient and economical maintenance and production of golf courses;

- Promote the welfare of the Superintendent and the profession.

At the MGCSA office, these objectives are pursued in a variety of ways.

"As with any organization, communication is a vital part of keeping members informed about what's going on — statewide, regionally and nationally," said the MGCSA's executive director. "Much of this is accomplished with *Hole Notes*, which features informative articles on a variety of pertinent subjects as well as timely association news."

"In recent years, contributions from several member golf course superintendents have increased, and they're most welcome since these stories bring the publication much closer to home as well as increase readership," he said, "and we're proud to say that *Hole Notes* is recognized as one of the best state golf course superintendents' publications in the nation."

Other forms of communication, again directed towards serving members, include:

- Employment opportunities that are distributed to all MGCSA members, with the MGCSA serving as a clearing house for golf course job openings;

- Special announcements regarding important warnings;

- Notices of monthly meetings;

- Membership rosters;

- Election information and ballots;

- Descriptions of MGCSA wearing apparel

- Environmental Guidelines booklet

"Today, as everyone knows, environmental issues are of prime concern to all superintendents," Turtinen said. "Through the help of many members, we produce the MGCSA Environmental Guidelines Book which offers more than 100 pages of state and local federal regulations affecting golf courses, and it's updated annually."

Reports also are made on research projects sponsored by the MGCSA to help members learn about the latest technologies of golf course agronomy to meet these environmental challenges.

One of the more visible aspects of the association's service to its members is the annual MGCSA Conference and Business Meeting — an informative, comprehensive, 3-day program of educational opportunities specializing in golf course maintenance.

"During the past two years this conference, held in conjunction with the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation, has expanded considerably," Turtinen said. "Along with

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presenting excellent speakers on a variety of subjects, the exhibit area for associate members has enjoyed a sell-out of the 150 booths available. The move from hotels into the metropolitan area to the Convention Center in downtown Minneapolis has proved successful."

During the year the MGCSA office also prepares information regarding other MGCSA-sponsored conferences, seminars and meetings which focus on ways to help superintendents improve themselves, their golf courses and their profession as well as the association's monthly meetings.

All of them provide an opportunity for individual superintendents to compare problems and concerns with their colleagues in an informal, casual atmosphere after a round of golf.

In addition, the office coordinates information regarding pesticide licensing sessions, which give members the opportunity to comply with state recertification requirements at the MGCSA's annual licensing seminar.

Throughout the year the MGCSA office keeps in close contact with association directors and chairpersons of the organization's 10 committees.

Primarily these duties include follow-up on requests by the President, attending the Golf Summit (a meeting of all Minnesota associations dealing in golf), informing the president of job openings, working with the Vice-President in regard to research notices, working with the Treasurer while sending records of deposits of monthly meetings, dues, advertising, apparel sales and depositing the monies in appropriate accounts, sending Board minutes prepared by the Secretary and creating and mailing membership cards to all members.

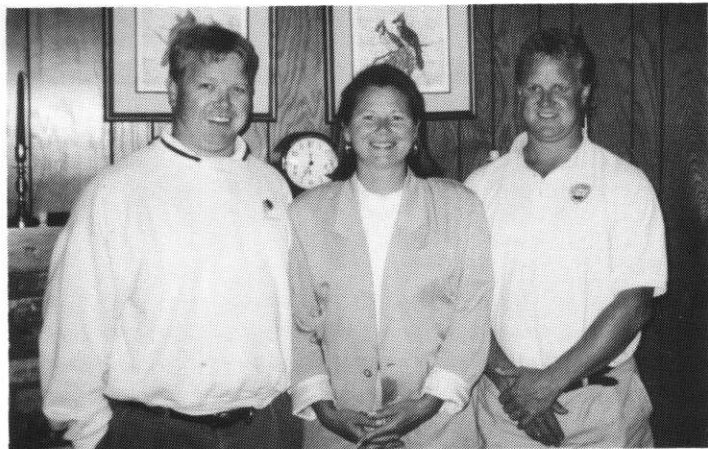
In addition, the office pursues all tasks assigned it by MGCSA committees: Arrangements, Research, Conference/Education, Membership/Scholarship, Environment and Government Relations, Editorial, By-Laws, Ethics, Industrial Relations, Nominations and Water Resources.

"What makes our work interesting and worthwhile is the dedicated manner in which directors and other association members work on these projects," Turtinen said. "Their enthusiasm has a way of generating more enthusiasm, and the results of their efforts are evident in so many positive accomplishments."

The association office also maintains close working relationships with suppliers, who help members considerably with advice on goods and services.

"In Minnesota we're very fortunate to have such strong, supportive associate members," Turtinen said. "Their financial support at conferences, meetings and through advertising is important of course, but moreover they play a very active role in helping develop several programs that help our members."

"Enjoyable, too, is our work with the various MGCSA-sponsored golf competitions," Turtinen said, "and it's been a pleasure to watch the growth and interest in all of them."



Jeff, Laurie and Scott Turtinen run the variety of tasks at the MGCSA business office in Wayzata.

Yes, activity in the MGCSA office has increased a thousandfold since the association was organized some 68 years ago.

"Those individuals who got it organized, then developed it year by year deserve a lot of credit for building an excellent foundation," Turtinen said.

Years ago, when the association was in its formative stages, association affairs were pursued out of the home of the member who had been elected Secretary.

Later, when the MGCSA began to grow considerably, both in membership and in its activities, the office became part of the Minnesota Golf Association's office, where, among other duties, information was mailed, money collected and *Hole Notes* was produced.

In the late 1980s the growth of both organizations caused leaders of both groups to review their relationship.

In 1990, the MGCSA decided to obtain its own office. This decision, in effect, was a positive testimonial to the growth of both organizations, and they parted amicably while noting they would always be willing to help each other. From the MGCSA's standpoint, it was a desire to provide a more direct service to its membership.

Turtinen Communications, a Wayzata public relations/graphic arts/association management firm established in 1964, first was retained to produce *Hole Notes*, the MGCSA's news magazine published 10 times annually. The Turtinens' first issue was the December/January 1989-90 publication. After various interviews were conducted by the MGCSA's Executive Director Search Committee early in 1990, the Turtinen firm was selected to begin serving on August 1, 1990.

At their Wayzata office they have the necessary working tools like computers, graphic arts equipment, cameras, a copy machine and fax machine as well as proper space to file all association records, publications, correspondence, photographs, job openings, advertising contracts and materials.

"When members call or write for information, we do our level best to respond as quickly as we can," Turtinen said. "We may not always have the answer right on the spot, but we'll find it or direct the member to the proper source. After all, we're here to serve the membership."