

HOLE NOTES

Official Publication
of the
Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association

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Editorial and Business Office

Scott Turtinen, Executive Director
Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association
240 Minnetonka Avenue South/P.O. Box 317
Wayzata, Minnesota 55391-1617
TEL: 612/473-0557 • FAX: 612/473-0576
TOLL FREE: 800-642-7227



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S DESK

Money: It's a Drag



As a bit of a naive and altruistic person, I sometimes get the feeling that I'm living in the shadows. I was reminded of this during discussions with a number of past presidents of the MGCSA a few weeks ago, and again at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Las Vegas. The message from both of these encounters is one we've all heard before: Money makes the world go 'round. Duh.

In a place like Las Vegas, where a hundred bucks can slip through your fingers like a one-shot lead at Augusta, you can easily lose your perception of what a dollar is worth. Twenty bucks in the slots here, fifty at the crap table there, another ten at the blackjack table, and suddenly you're trying to scrape together the ninety-nine cents for a hot dog. Amazing. Yet step back a few paces and take a look at what the players have helped finance, a few dollars at a time. Mega resorts of gargantuan scale. Colossal structures of extreme magnitude. Dizzying attractions. You get the picture. The point? The eighty bucks from one guy didn't build the city. But add it to the other twenty nine million visitors per year that contribute eight, and pretty soon you're talking about real money.

So what has the financial development of Las Vegas got to do with the past presidents of the MGCSA you ask? Wise question, young grasshopper! AS a mission of study, I informally polled seven of our former leaders as to their thoughts on the way our association is performing. I did this because in the course of doing business, it is sometimes easy to forget to listen to the customer. (Think of what you would hear if you called the past presidents of your club!) Thankfully, these gentlemen were more than willing to share their views and comments about our organization. Overall, I heard positive remarks regarding things like *Hole Notes*, education opportunities and research. There were, however, a few points of contention. Most notably, and with surprise, the question of our financial support of the Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation was brought up. (See article on Page 5.)

The connection is, I hope, obvious. The support of the MTGF has come a few dollars at a time. The fact that more and more people (visitors) attend the annual conference every year means that we are now talking about real money. If we attract more people, we will make more money. (Why do you think Las Vegas continues to grow?)

In our case, the ability to draw attendees from a much larger pool of folks has allowed for larger profits and the ensuing debate over where the money should go.

The challenge for our association is, while working within the framework of the Foundation, to learn how to make the best use of the profits.) This must be done carefully and wisely. For if we derail the MTGF, we will have effectively burned down the casino.

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Be sure to attend the MGCSA March Mini-Seminar. Vice-President Jim Nicol and ex-officio James Gardner have both endorsed Jack Matteffy as a "must see!" As we all need the best employees to effectively run our operations, we all need to get the latest information on how to hire and keep these key people. See you there! — Fred Taylor, MGCSA President

HOLE NOTES (ISSN 108-27994) is published monthly except bi-monthly December/January, February/March for \$2 an issue or \$20 per year by the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, Wayzata, MN 55391-1617. Scott Turtinen, Publisher. Periodicals postage paid at Wayzata, MN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HOLE NOTES, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, Wayzata, MN 55391-1617.