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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S DESK

We Need to Take the Lead For the MTGF to Succeed



A small group of leaders had a vision. This vision was to establish a foundation that brought together a wide group of professionals sharing a common interest in the green industry. They felt great things could come out of this group; thus the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation was formed.

The MTGF would have an annual conference and show that could grow to 5000 attendees. All these common groups would attend and hold their annual meetings and elections. There would be a large trade show that would be the envy of all. The MTGF would fund research and scholarships. They would lobby the legislators regarding new laws that affect our industry. We would have an Executive Director represent us at fundraising events and with the U of M, take the lead in establishing a new Turfgrass Research Center in Empire Township and help to bring the U of M's turfgrass program to national prominence. Everyone in the industry would want to be part of this great organization.

Now it is time to see how the vision is working. The MGCSA took the lead and donated seed money to establish the MTGF. Our Annual Conference and Show was moved to the Minneapolis Convention Center. A large trade show was born and many concurrent educational sessions were made available. Everything seemed to be going well; attendance from the other industry partners was poor "but they will be online soon" we were told.

The Board of Governors of the MGCSA voted to abandon its Annual Conference and Show, and turn it over to the MTGF. It was always a part of the grand plan. Everyone was going to combine their conventions with the MTGF's, with the exception of one group (the MNLA which is no longer part of the MTGF). A couple of years have passed and attendance has not been growing at the rate we anticipated. A group of leaders which represented each faction of the green industry met to plan the next big show. Lack of interest and enthusiasm was apparent in some of the parties involved. "Too much turf," one leader said. "The trade show should be free of charge," stated another. I asked each group when they were going to combine their conference with the MTGF and thus not compete? Most groups said never. Explanations were given, that they funded their programs with their own conferences and had a tradition they didn't want to relinquish. It seemed apparent to me the MGCSA conferences, which date back to 1926, were not looked to with the same esteem which we have for our proud tradition. They seemed insulted that I would hold such an opinion.

Here we stand today. The MGCSA makes up about 60% of the attendance. The MNLA (which no longer belongs) made up 15% and the rest of the partners made up the balance. We were led to believe 5,000 people would be attending. In reality, the attendance reaches approximately 1,000 people. Our educational opportunities have also diminished, but income is up, realizing approximately \$60,000 per year.

So my questions are:

- 1) What is the MTGF doing with the money?
- 2) Where are the research and scholarship programs headed? I was at one meeting and three MGCSA members were present with no other faction represented. It was decided we could fund very little without full participation.
- 3) How are the students going to get from St. Paul to Empire Township?
- 4) Is the U of M going to abandon all programs if we don't jointly participate in the Big Show?

5) Who are the future leaders?

I have always been of the mind that if you believe there are problems, you should be looking for solutions.

I believe we have three options:

1) Have the MTGF share the profits of the Annual Conference and Show. The MTGF would keep 50% and distribute the remainder to participants not holding conflicting annual meetings, based on their percentage of representation. (This is an old idea that died from lack of a second to the motion by our board.) This would give everyone needed money to fund their organizations, and over time the MTGF would also have more money, by way of more participation.

2) *Re-establish* our annual conference. Great education and small bull sessions. We would be following the lead of the other organizations in the MTGF.

3) Have our membership get more involved to make the MTGF realize its potential. This is the best of the three.

I do not believe we should split from the MTGF. However, the MTGF Board of Governors has some important decisions to make in a short time. I look to their leadership to come forward with answers prior to the MGCSA Annual Meeting.

Please volunteer your time and talents to make it the best educational opportunity for all of us! We need to take the lead for the MTGF to succeed.

— Jim Nicol, CGCSA
MGCSA President

**Plan to Attend
The MTGF
Conference &
Trade Show
Dec. 9, 10, 11
At The
Minneapolis
Convention Center**

HOLE NOTES

Official Publication
of the
Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association

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6th Annual Chapter Delegates Meeting

*MGCSA Chapter Delegate Keith Scott Traveled to GCSAA Headquarters
In Lawrence, Kansas and Came Back With This Report*

ACTIONS TAKEN

Recommendations to the GCSAA Board of Directors

Extend the current affiliation agreement for an additional five years, with minor changes to the annual reporting requirements. Affiliated chapters should be required to submit all annual affiliation requirements to GCSAA by March 31. Additional language under Article IV, Section G would enforce the attendance of representatives at the Chapter Delegates Meeting. If an affiliated chapter fails to send a representative, who is a member of the affiliated chapter, to the Chapter Delegates Meeting for two consecutive years, the chapter delegate's right to vote at the next annual meeting would be suspended.

Summary of Major Discussion Points

(The following are discussion points made during the meeting. It does not necessarily mean that action will be taken on the suggestions that were given.)

- *Article III, Section B* — The affiliation agreement allows affiliated chapters to use the affiliated chapter logo within the logo usage guidelines that were approved by GCSAA's board of directors. Affiliated chapters must ask for permission to use the primary GCSAA logo.

- *Article IV, Section G* — Should the meeting title be Chapter Delegates Meeting or Chapter Relations Meeting? It was agreed that this annual event is now referred to as the Chapter Delegates Meeting. The delegate should be the most active and involved member, and is responsible for bringing the opinions of the chapter's members to the meeting. The chapter delegate should participate in the Meet the Candidates activities and should share that information with the chapter's voting delegate.

- It is difficult for some of the smaller affiliated chapters to select a representative to attend the meeting. However, chapters with active board members should be able to identify one member to be the delegate.

- Chapter delegates are permitted to represent more than one affiliated chapter, if a chapter is unable to send a representative. However, the representative must be a member of the affiliated chapter. In a dire emergency, the chapter could send its paid administrator as the representative. The chapter administrator must be fully informed of their responsibilities as chapter delegate, and must report back to the chapter board of directors and members on the meeting outcomes.

- If an affiliated chapter fails to send a representative to the Chapter Delegates Meeting, who is a member of the chapter, for two consecutive years, the chapter delegate's right to vote at the next annual meeting shall be suspended. A letter will be sent to all eligible voting members of the chapter, notifying them that their chapter lost its privilege to vote as a block at the annual meeting. Each eligible voting member of the chapter must register during voter check-in times at the conference and show, in order to cast a vote at the annual meeting.

- *Article VI, Section C5a* — Affiliated chapters will not be required to publish a notice that their chapter is on probation or suspension.

- *Article IV, Section D2* — Affiliated chapters should always submit a copy of proposed amendments to their bylaws to GCSAA for review by legal counsel. This ensures that the chapter bylaws are not in conflict with GCSAA's bylaws.

- The purpose of requiring chapters to complete a standard annual report form is for GCSAA to be informed about chapter meetings, activities and events in advance. GCSAA staff may be able to provide planning assistance or resources for these events.

- It will be difficult to provide meeting and event information for the upcoming year on the annual report form because some affiliated chapters do not have their plans finalized at that time. Regardless, chapters should submit the information that is available at the time to GCSAA.

(Continued on Page 7)

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Chapter Delegates—

(Continued from Page 5)

Election / Soliciting Volunteers Candidates' Campaigns

- In past years, the candidates for GCSAA officer and director positions have spent many dollars and hours conducting telephone campaigns. It is a financial burden to them.

- Running for office is an opportunity, not a burden. Candidates should take advantage of the Meet the Candidates session and group presentations to talk with the chapter delegates. It is the candidate's choice to conduct a telephone campaign.

- GCSAA will develop a listserv for candidates and delegates to communicate by e-mail. Delegates may post questions to the candidates. The candidates may reply directly to the delegate, or post their reply to all listserv subscribers. Listserv participation is optional, but is cost effective. Candidates may contact delegates through the listserv and/or by telephone.

- Some chapter delegates are not interested in receiving telephone calls from the candidates. Delegates that do not wish to be contacted should not provide their telephone numbers.

- Delegates who wish to be contacted by the delegates should provide a telephone number where they may be reached directly.

- In their campaign brochures and materials, candidates are encouraged to provide their telephone number and an ideal time for the delegates to reach them. The brochure should also contain other background information that delegates need to know about the candidates.

- A booklet or standard operating procedure that clearly defines the role and responsibilities of chapter voting delegates is needed. This information could be passed on to new voting delegates as they transition into this role.

- Candidates could send a postcard to the voting delegates, requesting a specific appointment time to speak with them.

Volunteers at the Chapter Level

- There is a lack of volunteers at the local level to serve as chapter officers and board members. "Recycled" board members serve multiple terms in leadership positions.

- Hiring a chapter executive director or administrator takes the administrative burden away from the chapter board of directors. This allows them to have a more enjoyable and rewarding experience while serving their association.

- Delegates were reminded to submit their GCSAA committee interest forms to GCSAA no later than November 1. The applicant's chapter president must sign the forms. Affiliated chapters may adopt GCSAA's volunteer form as their own, in order to recruit volunteers.

- Chapters are encouraged to use the "1998 Leadership Handbook for GCSAA Affiliated Chapters" as a guide to

recruiting and working with committees and volunteers.

- Some chapter officers have a two-year term. This allows them time to understand their roles and responsibilities, and to become effective leaders.

- One affiliated chapter uses a trustee system, where former chapter leaders serve as advisors to the current officers and board. They encourage new volunteers to become involved.

- Chapters may also consider outsourcing administrative services. Affiliated chapters may want to consider using a secretarial service or staff from turf foundations to manage the chapter's day-to-day operations, and maintain membership, accounting and financial records.

- Appoint and solicit new members to serve on committees. A personal invitation to serve is usually effective. Train them to become committee chairs, and encourage them to become leaders of the association. Chapter leaders need to develop strong communication skills, be given incentives and should be provided with educational opportunities in order to serve effectively. Professional development units (PDUs) are available from GCSAA as recognition for chapter service.

Election Process

- A new voting system is in place, which automatically assigns individual votes to the individual's affiliated chapter, unless the individual objects.

- Smaller chapters may have fewer votes, but they have as much clout as the larger chapter.

- Publishing the election results in *Newsline* improved the accountability of voting delegates, but has caused more splitting of votes.

- Chapter delegates are the most informed, and should carry their members' votes to the annual meeting.

First Tee Program

- The program provides economically disadvantaged youth, ages 18 and younger, with an opportunity to play golf at affordable facilities. George Bush is the honorary chair of this program. The PGA, PGA Tour, LPGA, USGA and Augusta National are involved in this program.

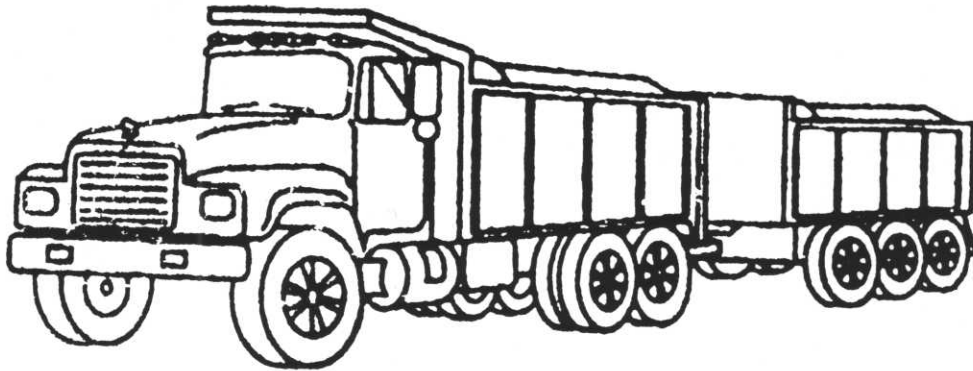
- GCSAA's role in this program is as significant as we wish to make it. GCSAA's affiliated chapters can become involved by serving as spokespersons for the superintendents' profession, or by speaking to the youth about superintendents' golf at the golf facility.

- Youth will learn: the rules of golf, how to play, golf course etiquette, agronomy and the positive impact of golf on the environment.

- Affiliated chapters may become involved in the program by serving as role models, by acting as grow-in or maintenance advisers, by contributing equipment and by allowing time for youth to visit their golf courses and learn about the superintendent's role.

- Some professionals will be hired to manage the First Tee golf facilities. GCSAA could consider paying the dues

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Chapter Delegates—

(Continued from Page 7)

of a class A or B GCSAA member that is strictly employed at a lower budget First Tee facility.

Affiliated chapters could provide expertise and give advice to the manager of the First Tee facility. This is a good example of members serving members through chapters.

- Youth who complete the program receive a card that designates them as First Tee graduates. This card allows them to play at designated 18-hole courses and other facilities for a reduced rate.

- Affiliated chapters are encouraged to promote the program in their chapter newsletters and through their chapter Web sites.

- Golf course superintendents may donate used equipment (i.e. ball washers) or provide other in-kind donations to the program.

- GCSAA will match local affiliated chapters with local facilities. Chapters are encouraged to support their local First Tee initiatives. They need to be proactive in identifying the “movers and shakers” in their community that are willing to develop a local First Tee program. Affiliated chapters should volunteer one of their superintendent members to serve as a representative on the local board. This is an opportunity for local golf course superintendents associations to increase their visibility in the community.

- Affiliated chapters may wish to identify potential land in their area (i.e. city parks) that could be developed into a First Tee facility.

- A list of First Tee program contacts will be provided to chapter delegates with the meeting outcomes.

- GCSAA will investigate the possibility of having its own First Tee facility, of providing scholarships to First Tee program participants who wish to pursue a career as a golf course superintendent, and of allowing First Tee to host its

annual meeting during GCSAA's international golf course conference and show.

Environmental Steward Award Program

- The number of applications submitted for this program has been significantly low since 1996.

- A standardized application form and a more simplified judging process are now in place to encourage more members to apply for an award. The awards will be made by affiliated chapter instead of by USGA region. Those receiving awards will still be required to meet minimum criteria, but this change allows for increased opportunities to recognize environmental leaders. Additional changes include evaluation in six specific categories including the ineligibility of previous national winners. These enhancements were made based on feedback from GCSAA members.

- Affiliated chapters benefit from having members apply. It has major PR value, and it educates employers and influential golfers about the superintendents role and their achievements.

- Applicants that are members of more than one affiliated chapter may list that information on the application. This increases their opportunity to be selected as an award winner.

Membership Standards

- Research was conducted during the past year on education programs, an occupational study, and employer perceptions by SRI International (consulting firm) and Mullen (public relations firm). The results of their research and studies was to be presented to the Membership Standards Resource Group for review at its October 4-5 meeting.

(Continued on Page 11)



Thank You



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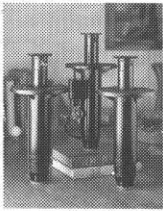
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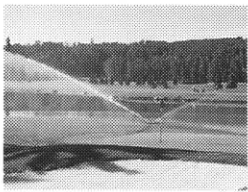
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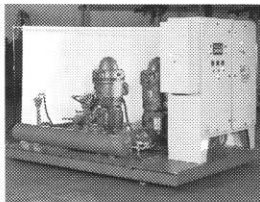
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