

GCSAA News

by Kenneth Ingram

This years Chapter Delegates Meeting was held September 24-26th in Kansas City. For the past 12 years now, GCSAA has used this forum to educate and inform members as to "what's going on," network with the Directors and staff, and to meet candidates for the upcoming elections. The intent is for the chapter delegate to bring the information back and "spread the word." So here you go.

Each year, without fail, some controversial issue arises shortly before the meeting. This year was no exception with talk of a possible name change for the association. I must admit that prior to the meeting I was leaning away from any name change. I just felt we had too much invested in the title "Superintendent." I listened to some very convincing arguments however that have changed my thinking. I see a lot of outside influences at work here. By that I mean public perception and allied associations. It's a lot like the Headquarters Location debate. Many people in the "golf community" were surprised that a professional organization in the game of golf was headquartered in Lawrence, KS and not somewhere in the sunbelt. I think you all can relate to this, upon telling someone you are a golf course superintendent, they say "what's that" or "but what do you do." Then you proceed to say that you "manage" a golf course. It seems that the word Manager or Management is going to be in our future. There is a lot of concern about confusion with the Club Managers (CMAA) so I think the word will be Management. We listened to lengthy discussion from staff and Past Presidents about confusing and outright embarrassing situations when prominent officials in the game just did not know what Superintendent's do. "Superintendent" is just not descriptive enough and worse yet conjures up images of building maintenance personnel. Also, as tapes showed, the acronym GCSAA is a terrific "tongue twister" for many people. Unfortunately there is talk as well about dropping the last "A" for America. You'll notice the PGA does not use it, the experts say the "AA" is the real tongue twister. Also, each year we become more of an international organization. Anyway, we did what GCSAA does best and that is appoint a task group to work on the problem. I'd bet that GSCAA will become the Golf Course Management Association in the near future. Keep in mind you can continue to call yourself Superintendent or whatever your club desires, it's just the name of the national association that will change. Ironically, 4 of the 9 current Board Members do not use the title Superintendent at their club.

The second most discussed topic had to be the new Golf Industry Show. This is really going to be something. A 6,000 sq.ft. USGA putting green designed by Fazio is going to be constructed on the tradeshow floor. There will be a driving range, a test track for electric vehicles, and a lot of other enhancements. The bottomline is that show is GCSAA's #1 asset and it was declining in size and attendance. All these changes and the partnerships we are entering into with other associations are designed to revitalize the show. It was continually stressed to us that it is still "our show" and the contracts with other groups are skewed heavily in our favor.

So much else was discussed it is hard to list. Saturday's session alone went from 6:30am to 9:30pm. We had a thorough financial report and things are much improved. GCSAA is a 17 million dollar operation with no debt. You've all heard by now that the Headquarters Location study is complete and we are not moving (for now.) There was an update on Certification. If you ever considered becoming a CGCS I hope this newsletter reaches you before November 1, 2004 because new methods come into effect and they look much tougher to me. There was a ton of talk about the "Success of the Facility" and a new "Facility Membership." Bottomline is the superintendent can't be successful if the entire facility is not and there are a lot of ideas being considered to make the Superintendent the key to the economic vitality of the facility so they can achieve career success, increase compensation, job security, etc.

I was able to meet all the candidates except Bob Ranquist, whom I like very much. Bob was stuck in the dark at Boca Rio with hurricane Jeanne but they had a speakerphone in his breakout room so everyone could ask questions. As always I left Kansas with a full tummy, tired fanny, and a lot of pride in my national association be it GCSAA, GCMA, or whatever.