

## GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting Summary by Tom Ritter, CGCS

The 2005 Chapter Delegates meeting was held September 30th-October 2nd in Kansas City. The meeting, now in its 14th year, is designed as a means for GCSAA to communicate to each of the 104 affiliated chapters current programs, initiatives and policies of importance to its members. In return, it provides an opportunity for chapters to express viewpoints; ideas and concerns they may have that are relevant to the profession, the industry and the game to GCSAA. Delegates were also able to meet with GCSAA board candidates to better understand their platforms and opinions on a variety of topics.

GCSAA President Tim O'Neill, CGCS began the meeting with a State of the Association report. Topics included member compensation (exceeded target), career success, chapter effectiveness, positioning Superintendents in the industry and increasing effectiveness of GCSAA education. Targets for improvements in these areas are set high and I feel confident that GCSAA has a very detailed, well thought out plan in place to deal with each of these issues.

Marketing GCSAA Class A and certified members: The next step in implementing PDI (Professional Development Initiative) will be to execute a marketing plan for the various membership classes. GCSAA will seek to position members differently from non-members, Class A members apart from Superintendent Members, and certified in a manner distinct from non-certifieds. The goal of such a marketing campaign is to communicate the value to the marketplace, which will result in a stronger position (financially, organizationally, professionally) for GCSAA members.

Member dues pricing structure: GCSAA dues increases have typically in recent years increased by 20% every 4 years. The proposed concept is to implement a regular increase that is tied to the consumer price index. Past feedback has supported such a model because it is easier to budget for members/facilities and could stem membership drops attributed to large periodic increases. A vote on this is scheduled to occur at the 2007 GCSAA annual meeting for implementation in 2008. I'll add a personal opinion here. First a couple of facts: 1) Membership retention does decrease following the \$50 dues increase every 4 years and 2) 97% of employers pay the dues for their Superintendents. In this era of maintenance budgets in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and higher, it is beyond me how a \$50 increase spread out over 4 years would cause a GM to tell his Super that the club would no longer pay his association dues. That is equivalent to \$1.04/month. At my club, I'm sure we throw out more stale bread every day than that. In the long run, both structures wind up only a few dollars apart 20 years down the road. I would support the new concept because ultimately it is a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other and if it eases the mind of a few owners/GM's and increases retention rates then I am all for it.

Membership growth and retention: A new plan was unveiled by staff that aims to reverse a trend of declining membership over the past 3 years. After reaching a high of 22,000-plus members in 2002, membership today stands at approximately 20,500. Increasing the GCSAA's membership ranks is important for numerous reasons. Primarily, added dues revenue allows the association to provide more programs and services to members. As important, a growing membership gives GCSAA a stronger position in the marketplace and thus able to advocate on behalf of its members more effectively. Communication with employers of non-GCSAA members is one of the new strategies being used.

Promoting diversity: GCSAA's diversity task group shared how organizations that do not embrace a diversity of people and ideas will not grow and will lose stature in the marketplace. Efforts to become more inclusive would be long term. The first step is to realize the importance of the issue and evaluate where the organization stands today.

Future of the profession: Delegates engaged in small group discussions about trends impacting the game of golf, golf facilities and golf course management profession over the next 15 years. The delegates' feedback, along with input from six GCSAA committees and/or task groups will help the board challenge its vision for the future.

Additional presentations were made to bring the delegates up to date on the chapter affiliation agreement, environmental programs, and an environmental baseline data collection program to commence in 2006.

GCSAA has 2 candidates running for the secretary/treasurer position and 5 candidates running for 2 director positions. It appears to me that all are well qualified and eager to serve. It's too soon for me to have an opinion on which candidates I think MAAGCS should support, but I am certain that there will be a lot more communication between delegates and candidates between now and the election at the GIS in February. I will learn more about the candidates in the coming months and be able to make an informed decision before the annual election.

The meeting was very well organized, intense (6:30am-9:30 pm on Saturday), and was a great opportunity for me to see first hand what a great staff GCSAA has assembled and the excellent group of Superintendents that are currently serving on the board. I want to let MAAGCS members know that I came away feeling very proud of our national association. They are very "in touch" with the many issues we deal with and are constantly striving to improve the careers/lives of its members.

BASF Honors Golf Course Superintendents at BASF 'People vs. The Pros' Golf Tournament at Barton Creek  
Maryland superintendent Scott Wagner competes in tournament

BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals recognized the critical role of golf course superintendents at the BASF People vs. the Pros golf tournament, held September 9 - 12 at Barton Creek Resort and Spa in Austin, Texas.

Twenty BASF-sponsored superintendents joined nearly 200 competitors vying to play against PGA professionals Justin Leonard or Ben Crenshaw for the opportunity to win \$100,000. The top two scoring superintendents not playing against the pros competed against one another in the second annual BASF Superintendent's Cup.

Scott Wagner, superintendent at Leisure World of Maryland (Silver Spring, MD), won the Mid-Atlantic GCSA qualifying tournament held at Waverly Wood G. C. on April 5, 2005. Wagner, who competed in the 18-49 year old division, finished the 36 holes with a combined net of 157 placing 7th overall in the People vs. the Pros tournament and placed fifth best amongst the superintendents.