

Chapter Delegates Meeting

October 10, 2009

Scott Wunder, MAAGCS Chapter Delegate, Secretary/Treasurer

On the Weekend of October 10th I had the privilege of attending the 2009 Chapter Delegates meeting. The main topics of discussion included the GCSAA Sustainability Initiative, Governance and Leadership at GCSAA, 2010 Candidate presentations, economic struggles and membership retention and recruitment. Below is a report of the meeting.

Chapter Delegates Meeting offers insight and a look ahead

Ninety GCSAA chapter delegates, representing 95 chapters, convened in Lawrence, Kan., and Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 9-11 to participate in a wide range of discussions, including the state of the golf economy, association governance, golf's relationship with the environment, and membership growth and retention.

"I was extremely impressed by the preparation and engagement of the delegates," said Jim Fitzroy, CGCS, meeting chairman and GCSAA vice president. "The questions asked were appropriate, and the discussions were thoughtful. That makes for a healthy meeting and gives me great confidence that the delegates will go back and communicate to their members so that they have a deeper understanding of what GCSAA is doing on their behalf and on behalf of the game."

Candidate presentations

In addition, candidates for president, vice president, secretary/treasurer and two open director positions met with the delegates. A shortened version of the candidate presentations will be available on GCSAA TV in the near future. Fitzroy, Wollaston Recreational Facility/Presidents Golf Club in North Quincy, Mass., is running unopposed for president; as is Bob Randquist, CGCS at Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, Fla., for vice president. Current directors Sandy Queen, CGCS at City of Overland Park, Kan., and Pat Finlen, CGCS at The Olympic Club in San Francisco, Calif., oppose each other for secretary/treasurer. Both of their two year director terms expire this year. Four candidates are vying for two open director positions: Bob Farren, CGCS at Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort; Todd Lupkes, CGCS at Palouse Ridge Golf Course in Pullman, Wash; Bill Maynard, CGCS at Milburn Golf and Country Club in Shawnee, Kan.; and Mike Wooten, CGCS at Cedar Ridge Country Club in Broken Arrow, Okla.

"The nominating committee did an excellent job in providing the membership a solid slate of candidates for the election in February," Fitzroy said. The feedback from the delegates is there will be some difficult choices, but all are extremely worthy of service."

Association operations and financial update

Thirty-one of the 39 new chapter delegates participated in an orientation session to learn more about their role and in greater detail how GCSAA functions as an association. The full contingent of delegates heard a state of the association presentation from GCSAA Chief Executive Officer Mark Woodard, CGCS. He noted GCSAA has been challenged financially by declines in industry advertising, trade show space, and conference and show attendance. However, he said GCSAA is in a better position than many associations because of a healthy financial reserve, a supportive industry, a loyal membership and no long-term debt.

Woodward also said the association's solid footing is buoyed by its participation in numerous allied association initiatives and by the importance owners and influential golfers place on the golf course superintendent.

"In my first 15 months on the job I have had the opportunity to travel all over the nation and meet with a broad spectrum of the industry," Woodward said. "Two things stand out: First, golf has never been more unified and committed to strengthening the game; and second, the recognized value of the GCSAA member is at an all time high. GCSAA has its challenges, but the leadership really looks at the situation as one of opportunity. We are in a strong position and much of the credit for that goes to the membership."

Sustainability

Delegates were also updated on the work of GCSAA and The Environmental Institute for Golf in sustaining the game. Chief among the efforts is the Golf Course Environmental Profile. GCSAA Director of Environmental Programs Greg Lyman explained that the nutrient survey results would be released in early December, building on the land use and water use/conservation reports issued over the past two years. Lyman noted that the data from the surveys has been crucial in working with lawmakers, media and allied golf associations in detailing golf's environmental footprint. Lyman also discussed the importance of the development of the new superintendent competencies, which will include an element of environmental management.

Perhaps the highlight of the meeting was a presentation on sustainability by University of Kansas Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications Simran Sethi. An internationally respected authority on sustainability and contributor to NBC Nightly News, Oprah Winfrey Show and Planet Green Channel, Sethi spoke about the sustainability with a focus on the triple bottom line: people, planet and profit. She applauded GCSAA, its members and The Institute for their commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in managing facilities. *(Continued on next page)*

(Continued from page 3)

"It's a challenge for you, and I realize that," Sethi said. "You have to serve your employers and you are pressured by golfers for perfection. You must have patience in this effort. Communications will be important. You will have to demonstrate why a change of behavior is important. Use the tools out there that are available to help. I think what the association and you are doing is wonderful. As long as the association and you are committed to transparency and continuous improvement, then you can be successful against detractors."

First timers impressed

A format change that focused on creating opportunities for small group discussions, expanded time with the candidates and more opportunities for networking was well received, especially by first-time attendees.

"I was blown away," said Daniel Salois, GCSAA Class A member at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Toledo, Ohio, and delegate for the Northwestern Ohio GCSA. "This was a great way for me to learn more about GCSAA and all of the resources it provides for the members. We have a very sharp staff that is committed to serving the members. I am going to go back and share with my chapter just how much GCSAA can help them and their facilities."

Jay Eccleton, CGCS at The Emerald at Maple Creek in St. John's, Mich., and Michigan GCSA delegate, challenged his peers: "GCSAA puts it right there in front of us. You cannot blame them. Shame on us the member if we do not take advantage of the resources. I learned a lot about the election process and the association overall. I am impressed."

Other discussions included:

- GCSAA governance issues, including voting procedures, dual membership and the chapter affiliation agreement, which will be renewed Dec. 31, 2009.
- efforts by GCSAA to manage its expenses and generate new revenues. While the board will approve the association budget in December, the sentiment is not to raise member dues for 2010.
- the health of the GCSAA Education Conference and the Golf Industry Show, as well as the future rotation of the event.
- GCSAA advocacy efforts with lawmakers, media and other audiences.
- best practices by chapters to increase effectiveness and engagement.
- GCSAA membership recruitment and retention activities.

NOTE: Presentations from the Chapter Delegates Meeting are available at www.gcsaa.org. Detailed outcomes from the weekend will be distributed to delegates in the upcoming weeks for their use at chapter meetings.

Relatively speaking, whichever candidate, Sandy Queen or Pat Finlen that does not get elected to the Secretary/Treasurer position will most likely fill one of the spots for Director. This will leave only one spot available for Director of which four candidates are running. If you have any input, suggestions or questions regarding the upcoming elections please feel free to contact me by phone 410-239-3232 or email scottwunder@hotmail.com. Your thoughts will be taken into consideration when the Board of Directors meets to discuss the elections.

News & Notes

Congratulations:

To Steve and Beth McDonald. They are the proud parents of their first child, Nola McDonald born on October 14th at 1:53 P.M. She weighted 7 lbs, 9 oz and was just under 20 inches in length. Both mom and baby are doing great!

New Members:

Erik Mikkonen, Chesapeake Bay GC at NE Class A
Joe Haskins, The Woodlands/Diamond Ridge, Class SM



Have experience. Will travel.

If you're looking for some help on your course, consider the Stores-on-Wheels®. We can deliver agronomic expertise, top brands and more straight to your course. Call us at 1-800-321-5325. We can help with whatever job you have in mind. www.JohnDeere.com/golf

GCSAA
PLATINUM PARTNER

JOHN DEERE
GOLF