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GEN AD JUNE 2011

## Letter from California GCSA President Rafael Barajas, CGCS

It is an honor and a true privilege to lead this association for the next twelve months. I would like to thank my fellow board members for their vote of confidence and for trusting me with this awesome responsibility. I promise to work hard on your behalf to ensure our association remains strong and prospers into the future.

In May, we had the opportunity to take part in a strategic planning session, facilitated by GCSAA staff members Steve Randall and Richard Pavlasek. The session is always energizing! Hearing input from the entire board to build on our strengths and understand areas our chapter can improve helps create a road map for success and helps us to move forward.

I would like to share a few outcomes from that session and goals for the coming year. First, the strength of the California GCSA is working on your behalf to represent our members in Sacramento. All of us understand the impact legislation may have in our profession. To capture the essence of our work in this area, we will launch communication titled "California Capitol News," or as our board called it CCN in the coming weeks.

The purpose of this message is to not only provide updates on legislative issues, but to highlight the work done in this area. Our government relations chairs, Jim Ferrin and Jim Alwine, are working to inform and advocate on behalf of the membership. The California GCSA needs to tout our efforts in this area and we see CCN as a way to deliver the message directly to our members.

As we move forward during these tough economic times, we must remain focused on issues that impact our industry. To no surprise, water is at the top of the list even though the drought is supposedly over. We need to work very closely with water agencies and local government, focusing on two primary initiatives. First, we will endeavor to create an open line of communication with the appropriate agencies with the objective of affording superintendents a voice as it relates to the type of water restrictions that would be reasonable and appropriate for golf course properties. Secondly, we hope to get as many golf course superintendents as possible involved in a public relations campaign aimed at communicating and educating the local government and water agencies as to the kind of proactive and voluntary water conservation efforts already initiated and implemented throughout our industry. Our efforts to conserve water shall be for naught if not communicated and brought to the forefront. Our Government Relations Committee will continue to monitor the approximately 40 initiatives on CGRC's "radar." These initiatives are in the areas of water conservation, pesticide regulations, and labor. The State of California is broken, but this doesn't stop them from bringing new bills to the table that could have a direct impact on our business.

We also need to continue to enhance our web site. We feel the site has taken great strides over the past year. We view our web site as a key communication tool and we want you to visit the site on a regular basis. Content and messaging will be relevant and timely for

*(Continued on page 12)*

## CAG MEETING UPDATE

On June 22 the California Alliance for Golf (CAG) covered a myriad of subjects during their meeting at The Olympic Club. Three particular items stood out and are worth noting to the membership. First was an update from CAG Sacramento lobbyist Steve Baker, followed by a presentation from California Turfgrass & Landscape Foundation (CTLF) Executive Director Bruce Williams, and finally a report from San Francisco Public Golf Alliance (SFPGA) co-founder Bo Links. They all “stood out” for the same reason. They echoed the root of golf’s problem as it tries to position itself in the public policy arena: Golf has started out well behind virtually every other parallel business/recreational activity in the State.

- Steve Baker of Aaron Read & Associates, whose \$48,000.00 annual retainer is paid by SCGA, SCPGA and NCPGA, informed us that the Girl Scouts of America have had a paid Sacramento lobbyist for years, no doubt to deal with the issues surrounding business related income of non-profit associations, the use of underage independent contractors, and the publication of the fat/calorie contents of cookies. The point: fundraising through cookie sales has been represented in the state capitol for years while our multi-billion dollar, environmentally sensitive industry has been only minimally represented recently.
- Bruce Williams described in some detail the ways in which the colleges and universities of most eastern and midwestern states, particularly public universities, are employed to perform the raw research so vital to their turfgrass and landscape industries, while in California even the inadequate UC Riverside program has fallen into such

disrepair that unless the CTLF gains a modicum of traction, golf in California will have practically zero access to the basic research routinely available to its counterparts in other parts of the country.

- SFPGA’s Bo Links explained that as much as their organization appreciated the ad hoc contributions of SCGA, SCPGA and NCPGA, without the pro bono efforts of various local law firms whose love for golf trumps common sense, their successful intervention in the CBD’s Endangered Species lawsuit against the City and County of San Francisco and their thus far successful political organizing efforts regarding Sharp Park Golf Course would not be gaining the traction necessary to succeed.

The common thread in all three stories, “We have a lot of work to do!”

Would that golf had undertaken the development of a statewide advocacy arm during the salad days of the 1990s, when the task would have been made that much easier by the free flow of dollars. But our industry possessed no such presence in that era, and lamenting that lost opportunity neither obviates the need to get about taking up the effort now nor makes the task any easier or less expensive. Indeed, if anything, delay only adds to the difficulty and expense.

This isn’t going to be easy, but it is going to be necessary. One day, one painstaking step at a time. But I do believe that last week’s CAG meeting gave us the pieces to start down the road.

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### Barajas (Continued from page 14)

your needs!

Soon, you will see information outlining our annual conference and chapter golf championship. This will be a great opportunity for affordable education, networking and communication. Not only is this a large endeavor, but also our board continually looks for ways to enhance the value of your membership. The board has also discussed bolstering programs for research, pursuing an allied relationship with the California Turfgrass Landscape Foundation and will consider working jointly with our local chapters to promote our profession.

A great team leads the California GCSA. Irene Cline and Kim

Milne have assumed the chapter executives role and are a great asset with our day-to-day operations. I would also like to thank immediate past president Kevin Friesen, CGCS and incoming vice president Mike Swing, CGCS from Visalia Country Club and newly elected secretary-treasurer Jason Green from San Jose Country Club for their continued leadership, and the rest of the board members current and newly elected for their support.

Great individuals work together to form an effective team. Our team looks forward to working with you.

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