



# Turf Times



The newsletter from the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association

Bi-Monthly Update November/December Volume 32, No. 5 2003

## President's Message



The winter season is upon us and now is a great time to get caught up on your local and national association updates. Please take a few minutes to read the following important information concerning you, your industry and GCSAA.

During the third weekend in September, I had the opportunity to join 109 other superintendents at the GCSAA delegates meeting in Kansas City, Kansas. Also in attendance was the GCSAA board of directors, ten GCSAA department managers as well as Steve Mona and his executive staff.

The meeting began early Saturday morning at 7:00. The agenda was current and the entire two day meeting was extremely well managed and on time. Members had many opportunities to ask questions as well as agree or disagree with the topic at hand. Throughout the day, we listened to updates regarding current and future GCSAA business and programs. Saturday afternoon we listened to the GCSAA board candidate presentations and after dinner, we broke out into small groups to ask each candidate our own specific questions.

On Sunday, Tom Mason from Birmingham Country Club (MI) and Pat Finlen from The Olympic Club (CA) gave all of us an excellent presentation on the headquarters relocation study. Sunday's events ending at 12:00 and I headed back to Traverse City at 1:30. My hat goes off to the entire staff at GCSAA. They are a very hard working group of people that only want to make our lives better.

Your NMTMA board members will be discussing all of the following information at their next board meeting. The GCSAA management team really wants to hear from you regarding these current issues. Please contact GCSAA or me if you have any questions and now for the meat and potatoes of the 2003 delegates meeting.

- **Organizational Audit**

The GCSAA Board of Directors, as representatives of the membership, conducted an independent organizational audit that included a number of findings and recommendations. The audit gave the association high marks for establishing four strong goals and a clear vision held by the board and staff.

Delegates engaged in discussions and small group exercises to provide feedback on how to measure progress in achieving the association's four goals and 34 strategic indicators that have been identified. This is important to help ensure that GCSAA continues to build an association that best meets member needs, clearly defines the direction members want the association to go and clearly defines the roles of the board, chief executive officer and staff and their accountability for results.

- **Chapter/GCSAA affiliation issues**

Delegates supported a one-year extension of the current affiliation agreement, which is set to expire December 31, 2004. This will allow time to address several issues related to how GCSAA can most effectively partner with affiliated chapters in the future. A task force consisting of representatives from the Chapter Relations Committee and the Membership Committee will be appointed this Fall to review these issues and bring forward a recommendation at next year's Chapter Delegates Meeting. Issues for discussion include:

- *Conformity of membership classifications* – Should chapters be required to maintain the same definitions as GCSAA for Class A and Superintendent Member members? Section IV.D.1. of the Chapter Affiliation Agreement states that chapter membership classifications for golf course superintendents and assistant golf course superintendents shall be consistent with the same GCSAA classifications. However, with the implementation of the Professional Development Initiative (PDI), the definitions and requirements for GCSAA golf course superintendent and



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assistant golf course superintendent membership classifications have changed, and there is no longer conformity among chapters and GCSAA. If conformity continues, then chapters would be required to amend their bylaws with the new definitions by December 31, 2005. Additionally, affiliated chapters and GCSAA would need to follow a new record keeping process to ensure consistency in Class A and Superintendent Member members.

Another consideration is the local grandfathered Class A members. Should they be allowed to maintain this status if conformity was required? There are two options:

- **Option 1:** Allow local Class A grandfathered members to maintain this status. It would mean that chapters would simply need to keep separate lists or records of these grandfathered members because the definition of a local Class A grandfathered member would differ from the other Class A members in the chapter.
  - **Option 2:** Require the local Class A grandfathered members to conform. If they wished to remain a Class A member, then they would need to join GCSAA and meet the qualifications for Class A membership. Otherwise, they could reclassify to a superintendent member status with their chapter (and still be grandfathered from the dual membership requirement).
- **Creation of a facility membership** – Chapters can create a facility membership for golf course superintendents that are working for facilities with limited resources. The membership is in the facility's name. The facility designates the recipient of the membership benefits. The recipient could be the superintendent, the owner, the spray tech or whomever the facility chooses. It would not be a Class A or Superintendent Member membership, and no voting privilege would be permitted. This facility membership is designed to include those facilities who are operating with limited resources, and is not designed to circumvent the dual membership requirement. The delegates were in support of adopting a facility membership to help ensure that all golf course superintendents are included in their local associations.
  - **Effectively serving affiliated chapters** – Affiliated chapters and GCSAA have a common initiative to serve members, advance the profession and enhance the vitality and growth of the game of golf. Delegates were asked the question, "How can GCSAA effectively help 103 affiliated chapters serve their members in the future?" Delegates reviewed a list of many of the common challenges to GCSAA in serving chapters. They also reviewed a list of competencies and resources needed for chapters and GCSAA to ensure success, and were asked to provide feedback on how to ensure that chapters and GCSAA more effectively partner with one another.
  - **Golf course superintendent roles and representation at facilities**  
Delegates discussed the challenge in clearly defining the role and responsibilities of the golf course superintendent, as well as the number of individuals at one facility who share similar responsibilities. The Membership Committee will continue to address this issue.
  - **GCSAA committee selection process**  
A new committee structure is being designed to achieve four primary objectives:
    - To broaden the working perspectives of committees, and raise the primary scope of their discussions to more strategic and policy levels.
    - To create greater flexibility in addressing specific areas of need by using ad-hoc task groups as needed.
    - To create a complementary, experience-based approach to committee volunteer selection, in concert with the current interest-based approach, in order to bring additional specific expertise and outside perspectives.
    - To support the professional development of the organization's future volunteer leaders.

This new committee structure will keep the GCSAA board and committee members engaged at a more strategic level. It will also help engage a larger number of members in committee service. This new process will be piloted in 2004 with the Environmental Programs Committee (encompassing environmental programs, government relations and research) and the Strategic Communications Committee (encompassing brand marketing, member communications and Web strategy). To serve on a GCSAA committee, members must first complete a volunteer form. It is available on the web site ([www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org)) through December 1. Committee members will be selected based on their expertise in a particular area first, followed by previous experience or service, and then their general interest.

- **Update on the financial status of the GCSAA and discussion of long-term dues pricing structure**  
The organization remains financially strong, despite the economic times. Delegates discussed a long-term dues pricing strategy that would include communications to the membership about the reasons for a dues increase as they are

planned. This feedback will be forwarded to the Membership Committee for further discussion.

- **Alternative career paths**

Delegates discussed the idea of developing a general manager certification program. GCSAA is investigating partnerships with allied associations to develop programs that address the superintendent's progression into upper management positions.

- **Superintendents' involvement in growth of the game**

John Miller, CGCS, chapter delegate from the Miami Valley GCSA, facilitated a discussion about the superintendent's role in growing the game. Delegates shared ideas about growing the game. They included: chapters conducting an economic impact study to demonstrate golf's impact on tourism and economic growth; encouraging more superintendents to get involved in junior golf programs; and developing education to help superintendents learn how to market themselves, their facilities and the amenities they offer to the public.

- **Update on the Professional Development Initiative (PDI)**

The PDI was launched July 1, 2003. Delegates participated in a demonstration of Member Central. Members who do not have online access can document their points and request their transcript through GCSAA's fax on demand service at (888) 838-4419, or they can contact the service center and request information through the mail.

- **Certification program and exam update**

Work is continuing on a restructure of the certification exam to a competency-based program that ties in with the 48 competencies identified through the PDI.

- **Articles of Incorporation and bylaws amendments for the 2004 annual meeting and election**

A number of proposed amendments that will bring the association's bylaws up-to-date with the way that business is currently being conducted were presented to the delegates for their input.

- **Headquarters resource group location process**

Pat Finlen, CGCS, headquarters resource group chair, and Tom Mason, vice chair, presented to the delegates the location study process. Phase I of this process is to identify the stakeholders impacted, engage them in the process, and identify the strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities associated with the GCSAA's location and potential new locations. At the end of this process, if the conclusion is to move forward with the study, then Phase II will be implemented. Phase II is to evaluate locations, costs, positive and negative impacts on operations, and specific risks and rewards. A report will be written and submitted to the board around July 1, 2004. The report will include responses to the questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- What is the best plan to get from where we are, to where we want to be?

Questions or feedback for the headquarters resource location group should be sent to [location@gcsaa.org](mailto:location@gcsaa.org). Delegates were encouraged to gather feedback from their members and relay it to the resource group.

- **The Environmental Institute for Golf**

An update was given on the Institute. Recommendations from a recently conducted strategic planning session (attended by representatives from nearly 50 environmental and golf organizations) will focus on: water management; integrated plant management; wildlife/habitat management; site, design and construction; and energy and waste management.

- **National Golf Foundation (NGF) Avid Golfer Attitudes and Perceptions Study/GCSAA Outreach Program**

Delegates received a copy of the NGF's 2003 report on the key findings regarding golf course conditions, the environment and superintendents. The report indicates that superintendents are being recognized as businesspeople and not skilled blue-collar workers. Golfers are now more likely to view a superintendent as the manager of the facility.

- **GCSAA's International Golf Course Conference & Show**

Changes in the programming and schedule for the 2004 conference and show in San Diego were discussed with the delegates. Ideas for making this a must-attend event were shared. Delegates were reminded that a new GCSAA member receives complimentary registration to the first conference and show he/she attends. Chapters may wish to provide financial assistance to a member to help offset their travel expenses to conference and show, or ask vendors to sponsor this.

Please visit the web site at [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) to view the full set of outcomes from this meeting, as well as the slide presentations, notes and list of chapter delegates.

## Opinion Column

I am writing in response to past-president Jon Scott's article concerning PDI in the September/October issue of the NMTMA newsletter. First, let me say that I respect Jon's opinion and his work while involved with the NMTMA. We owe a lot of what we have today to Jon and to his efforts to help all superintendents. And as he mentioned in his first paragraph, I really appreciate Jon for always giving his opinion upfront but more importantly being open to listen to all sides, and changing his mind if he is convinced.

However, I feel compelled to respond to his comments about PDI backfiring. Jon indicated that he believed that PDI will backfire unless entry is made accessible to superintendents who have elected to get a two-year degree to achieve Class A or keep Class A status in GCSAA. As many of you know, I have a two-year certificate from Michigan State University and I believe that the path to Class A status is definitely accessible. Will gaining entry into Class A take a little more for those without a 4-year turf degree? Yes, but in what profession does it not. Do we want achieving Class A status to stand for something and be recognized for more than just being a superintendent for 3 years and paying dues in an association? The membership said yes, and I believe this will help elevate us all. As for maintaining my Class A status, I will be able to obtain credit for educational opportunities on the local basis. Prior to PDI, the only real way to obtain these points was through GCSAA seminars or education. Now, great programs like the MTF, will count towards meeting these obligations.

Years ago, I became eligible to apply for certification long before I actually took the exam. So why didn't I take it sooner? Because, although I was a superintendent, responsible for a golf course, my main focus at the time was spent on developing and maintaining a fast growing parks and municipal building site system and very little on the golf course itself. My golf expertise was used in these other areas, but because I was not a fulltime superintendent I didn't feel right obtaining the CGCS status. I still feel that in certain situations, I need to pay my dues, relative to experience or by working towards some type of goal (including keeping my job and my state pesticide certification current).

A question needs to be asked: Is there a difference in a two-year degree versus a four-year? Yes, and if I had it to do over, I would have worked towards a two-year turf degree with a two-year business addition. The job of superintendent has changed so much; having a business degree would be a big help and benefit to my career and future.

Jon also mentioned that he was in favor of inclusion versus exclusion. There is nothing to stop chapters from inviting non-member superintendents to their meeting or education session. The only restriction detailed by the chapter affiliation agreement with GCSAA is that these superintendents cannot join a local chapter as a superintendent without joining the national. This was also heavily discussed five years ago when this was overwhelmingly adopted.

GCSAA has offered a limited budget membership now known as the Technical Assistance Program, where with local chapters involvement, a course or club can receive information and obtain complimentary membership. Currently, a member group is reviewing the renewal of the chapter affiliation agreement. As part of the conformity discussion, there could be a provision that would allow chapters to establish a facility membership, with a designate from the facility, who would receive the benefits and represent the facility at

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meeting.

Those superintendents who say they can't afford membership would like the opportunity to gain knowledge and education that is presented at a chapter meeting. And they can right now. To assist with this, GCSAA offers each chapter the ability to give three complimentary GCSAA memberships per year to a non-member superintendent. However, this program is rarely used.

I believe that one way to view membership and educational meetings, seminars, and conferences is that they are an investment in you. Are you worth that or by attending these, will it benefit you later? Having done this for many years early in my career, I today can say yes. Was it tough at times? You bet, but finally it paid off. That is what PDI is all about – helping you develop your career and giving you the resources (both in membership and education) to accomplish your goals. It may not be easy, but it will be effective. Is that not part of the American way?

Respectfully submitted,

Jon D. Maddern, CGCS  
Golf Course Superintendent  
Elk Ridge Golf Club  
2003 GCSAA President

***You are invited to attend the  
2003 Northern Michigan  
Turfgrass Academy***

Make plans to join us at the Grayling Holiday Inn for this all day seminar to be held Tuesday December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Speakers include:**

***Dennis Shepard***      **Syngenta Turf and Ornamental**

***Joel Simmons***      **Soil First Consulting and Earthworks**

***Ron Calhoun***      **Michigan State University**

**Check-in is at 8:00 a.m. with the meeting starting at 8:30 a.m.**

**Please register with Jennie at 1-866-705-8180 on or before November 26.**

*This meeting will be worth .57 GCSAA points.*

# 2003 N.M.T.M.A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

## **Program & Golf – Mike Normand, Jim Bluck, Steve Sump, Joe Breighner**

The August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting was held at the Hidden River Golf and Casting Club and featured USGA agronomist Bob Vavrek as the speaker. Mr. Vavrek enlightened us with a talk and slide presentation about crown hydration issues as well as other topics of interest. Attendance was excellent with about 95 people attending, making it one of the largest August meetings that I can remember. Prizes were awarded for the top nine places in the low gross competition as well as the top nine places in the low net as well. Again thanks should go out to the host superintendent Steve Young, and to club Vice President Darrin Philport for letting our membership utilize their fine facility.

The NMTMA Scholarship fundraiser was held at the Arthur Hills course at Boyne Highlands Resort on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Again attendance was excellent with roughly 90 people participating. Weather and conditions were ideal as the scoring showed with the team of Dan Bissonette, Joe Breighner, Deb Massey, and Ross Blumke crushing the field. Thanks go out to all that donated prizes for this event, as well those that were generous enough to be hole sponsors. Our appreciation also goes out to Joe Breighner, Director of Golf Course Maintenance, as well as host superintendent Brent Larson for letting our membership utilize their fine facility.

Thanks should also go out to all those that participated in our events during the 2003 season. The strength of our organization really showed in number this year and we look forward to a great lineup of events in 2004. Finally, anyone wishing to host an event in 2004 please feel free to notify any of the members of your board.

## **M.T.F. Fund-raiser - Steve Hammon, Mike Normand**

This years MTF fund-raiser at the Grand Traverse Resort was a huge success on June 10th. Although it rained very hard the last nine holes, everyone finished and had a great time. Thanks to Paul Galligan, Chuck Rocconi, Gene Davis, Nancy Ellis and Ron Sanborn for their hard work hosting this year's event.

Thank you to Deep Roots, Uniroyal, Lesco, J. Mollema, Tire Wholesalers, Valley Turf, Simplot Partners, Rhino Seed, Spartan Distributors, Syngenta, Tri Turf and Tri Turf Soils, Grigg Brothers, Turfgrass, John Deere Golf & Turf, Weingartz, EZ Go Carts and United Horticulture Supply. Without the constant support of these vendors, we would be paying much more than \$125.00 for this special event.

Thanks to those of you who donated raffle prizes this year we had loads of them! Lastly, thank you to everyone who played in this year's event. We raised \$4,641.58 for the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation.

## **Education - Craig Hoffman, StevePrincinsky**

### **GCSAA Liaison – Craig Hoffman**

We have had great turnouts for all of our meetings this year and a huge success for the mini conference with 120 registered and over a dozen speakers. Thanks to all who took part in these functions, including members, speakers and guests. We are now able to receive PDI points for almost all meetings since July; check out [www.nmtma.org](http://www.nmtma.org) for more info on current and upcoming meetings. We are also looking for superintendents with a hot topic to address at the mini in April, some one other than Bissonette talking about his run down Ski Doos.

## **Environmental - Craig Hoffman**

Most of this year I have been working with the Michigan Environmental Stewardship Program and GCSAA Environmental Stewardship Committee, the big issues are Water and Phosphorus. During the course of the summer I met with some of our state and federal folks, House of Representative Scott Shackleton, State Senator Jason Allan, and U.S. Congressman Bart Stupak. The water bill that was floating around this spring was huge and thanks to Greg Lyman and Tom Smith, and the support of the turf industry MTF, they were able to put a voice in Lansing. The bill in question is Senate bill 289; this bill was approved by the house on July 16 by a 91-14 vote, and was approved by the senate on July 17 by a 30-0 vote. The Governor then signed the bill August 7, this took effect August 8 and it is now Public Act 148 2003. What this means to us is an increase in the DEQ water use report, thank Greg and Tom for the work on this one.

What is on the plate right now is Phosphorus; this is being discussed with legislation and our state departments to make regulations on phosphorus. This is a national concern not just in Michigan; I will keep you posted on this.

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**Scholarship – Scott Pulaski, Dan Hunt**

We interviewed 4 candidates. This year’s winner was Lori Williams. Lori was a senior in the two year Turfgrass Management program.

Members Scholarship: This year’s winner was Sara Robak.

**Publications – Scott Pulaski, Steve Hammon**

5 issues of the Turf Times newsletter were sent out to our members. As always, any input from the membership regarding topics/suggestions/comments/articles is much appreciated. The issues are still being formatted using a home computer and being e-mailed to Kay. This is saving around \$100.00 per issue.

This year we stayed with Mid-North Printing for printing of the membership directory. We plan to use this company again next year. Remember, the directory is only as accurate as the information that we have on file for you. As you receive your membership renewal, please take a few moments to make any corrections on your invoice or by using the website nmtma.org. We will be using the website information to print the 2003 NMTMA Directory. The advertising portion of the directory remained the same.

**By-Laws – Scott Pulaski**

No changes were made to any of the by-laws for the 2002/2003 season.

**NMTMA Investment Report October 2003 Steve Hammon, Co-Chair**

Beginning Balance October 2000	\$2,964.36
Balance October 2001	\$3,224.14
Balance October 2002	\$3,132.02
Balance October 2003	\$3,493.84

Despite the poor economy and poor market performance, our NMTMA mutual fund investments are steadily growing. We have gained \$529.48 over the past three years.

**Membership – Steve Princinsky, Jim VanAntwerp**

Following are the number of members we have had in the past four years and how our current membership stands as of 9-30-03.

Class	2000	2001	2002	2003
A	132	131	113	122
B	45	43	31	35
C	34	31	25	28
D	8	9	6	7
E	9	10	6	3
F	18	16	13	9
G	71	80	69	70
H	15	19	22	24
M	1	2	1	4

**Election Candidates**

**Three Year Term – Three Seats Available**

- Jim Bluck – Forest Dunes Golf & Country Club
- Paul Emling – Arcadia Bluffs Golf Club
- Steve Shane – Lochenheath Golf Club

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*...and we encourage you to support them*

Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association  
 P.O. Box 80086  
 Lansing, Michigan 48908



**NMTMA Executive Committee**

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Craig Hoffman	Vice President
Dan Hunt	Treasurer
Tom Reed, Sr.	Executive Secretary

Dr. James B. Beard  
 International Sports Turf  
 Box 10065  
 College Station, TX 77842

77842-10065

