

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

A PAGE OF GCSAA HISTORY



Sixty-two years ago, a "greenskeeper" by the name of Colonel John Morley convinced 60 of his peers to gather at Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, OH. Morley's purpose was to launch a national organization to raise the status of his profession through education and cooperation. On September 13, 1926, the National Association of Greenskeepers of America (NAGA) was formed and Morley served as its president for the next six years.

From this humble beginning the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America (GCSAA) has developed into an international

group of high esteem. The International Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim, CA, is a shining example of the success of GCSAA and the economic importance of golf in the world.

To really appreciate the progress GCSAA has made, you need some background on its growth and development over 62 years. During this period, the group has carried three different names. Just 12 years after its founding, the NAGA began to move away from the title of greenskeeper by changing its name to Greenskeeping Superintendents Association (GSA). That year the association had 500 members. The term greenskeeper was laid to rest in 1951 with the change to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

By 1957 membership had grown to 1,000. After nearly 30 years, GCSAA finally hired its first executive director and moved the headquarters from Illinois to Jacksonville Beach, FL. Between 1957 and 1970, the post-war golf boom helped GCSAA triple its membership. Land Grant universities and the Agricultural Extension Service started devoting more effort to golf course research and training superintendents. GCSAA strengthened its relationship with the United States Golf Association and the National Golf Foundation.

In the last two decades, operating from its headquarters in Lawrence, KS, GCSAA has increased its membership to 7,500. The conference now ranks among the 200 largest in the country.

Throughout its history, the secret to GCSAA's strength has been its deep roots at the chapter level. Created primarily through the cooperation of local organizations in cities like Chicago, Toledo, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and New York, GCSAA has built a national organization on top of a foundation of nearly 100 chapters. The chapters have helped the national get out of some pretty sticky situations in the past, including during the Depression, when the group lost \$16,000 when its bank went belly-up.

On the other hand, GCSAA has accomplished things that its chapters could not have achieved on their own. The show is a prime example, not only for the number of exhibits, but for the large selection of educational sessions it offers.

Another example is certification. The letters CGCS after a superintendent's name have national significance and have led, in part, to perhaps the highest salaries in the Green Industry. And by working with PGA and NGF, GCSAA has obtained for the superintendent a few well-deserved moments of recognition on television during tournaments.

As John Morley and the 60 other superintendents who gathered at Sylvania Country Club realized in 1926, you can't do it alone. Your reputation and skill can't improve if others in your profession stand still. To improve yourself, you must help improve the profession.

That's what GCSAA and its 100 chapters have done and continue to do. It's a record other associations would do well to follow.

Bruce Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

21-23 Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference, Pittsburgh Expo Mart/Radisson Hotel, Monroeville, PA. Contact Dr. Tom Watschke, Dept. of Agronomy, 405 Ag. Admin. Bldg., University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1613.

28 South Carolina Annual Grounds Maintenance Conference, Sheraton Columbia Northwest, Columbia, SC. Contact: Dr. Bob Mazur, Clemson University, Dept. of Horticulture, Clemson, SC 29631, (803) 656-3403.

28-1 Northeastern Pennsylvania Turf and Grounds Maintenance School, Lucerne County Community College, Nanticoke, PA. Contact: William Pancek, Lackawanna County Extension Service, 200 Adams Ave., Scranton, PA 18503, (717) 963-4761.

MARCH

11-15 Canadian Turfgrass Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia. Contact: Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, 2000 Weston Rd., Suite 203, Weston, Ontario, Canada M9N 1X3, (416) 249-7304.

15-18 Sports & Events Management '89 Conference, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Steve Mountain, International City Management Association, 1120 G Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005, (202) 626-4600.

21 Western Sports Turf Institute, California Polytechnic Institute and University, Pomona, Ca. Contact: STMA, 400 N. Mountain Ave., Suite 301, Upland, CA 91786, (714) 981-9199.