

MWGA Newsletter

Take a New Look at MWGA

by Lori Wohlrabe, VP Program Development

The MWGA web site is sporting a new look this spring as the centerpiece of a new push toward better communications with our members. The main reasons for redesigning the web site were to make it easier to update and ensure that the information presented on the site matches the information in the yearbook. The time-consuming and error-prone update process that we went through in past years will be much simpler with the new web site. While that may not seem like a big win, the MWGA is a volunteer organization with limited resources, so simplicity translates to better service for our members.

Those who are familiar with the MWGA site will find that the content hasn't changed much, but the look and navigation are new. A few key changes to note are:

- More of the site pages, including tournament entry forms, are now in PDF format and can be viewed using Adobe® Acrobat Reader (a free software that is commonly used on most web sites these days).
- Competitive and social activities now appear under separate menu options labeled "Tournaments" and "Events".
- The pairings and results for each tournament will be viewable from a link on the "Tournament Schedule" grid as they become available.



- The Tournament Players Information sheet and hard card can be found under the "Tournaments" menu. They will no longer be included with the pairings in pre-tournament mailings.

We hope that you will find the new site informative and easy to use. The address is still www.mwga-online.org. Add it to your list of favorites and visit often.

Here are some other ways that the MWGA is focusing on communication in 2006.

E-mail: Over the winter you received a postcard requesting your e-mail address and many of you responded. Be assured that your e-mail address will be used only for MWGA business and will not be shared with any other group. E-mail will be used to send tournament reminders, entry confirmations and other communications.

Front continued on page 7.

INSIDE:

President's Column

*New Leadership
Structure*

*Membership
Advantages*

MWGA Foundation

President's Column *by Barb Hanson*

In Minnesota there are five seasons - spring, summer, fall, winter and golf season! I love the beginning of golf season, because it feels like it will stretch on for a long time. I also love the first few rounds I play each year, because my expectations are few and I'm just happy to be playing again. Maybe we should use this mindset all the time!

I am especially pleased to serve as your president again this year. You made that possible by approving a by-law change last fall, and I think it's a decision that will serve our organization very well. We are excited about having greater continuity in leadership, more consistency in policy and decision-making, and an increased possibility of new initiatives that can be seen to completion. I've heard many former presidents say that they felt like they had just learned the ropes and gotten started when their term ended. I know I would have felt that way last fall.

An important initiative that the Executive Board and I began over a year ago has come to a conclusion. Please read all about this in Kim Vanderwall's column on page 3.

Another area of concentration has been to explore a stronger relationship with the MGA. Did you know that YOU are a member of the MGA and that there are opportunities for you to not only play golf but to volunteer in their tournament structure? We all hold our handicaps under the GHIN system and it is the MGA that manages that system, so we are MGA members. Consider playing in the Women's Mid-Amateur tournament (must be over 30 years old) or the Mixed Team Event (male/female team) or their newest offering, the Associate Member Days (very much like our Association Days). Check the Minnesota Golfer or the MGA web site, www.mngolf.org, for more details.

As always, the most important piece of the MWGA is YOU. The MWGA is a volunteer organization; none of this would be possible without the women who have given of their time to promote women's golf. Please consider doing your part in any one of many ways: tournament worker, association day volunteer, rules committee, Junior Girls' tournament walkers, club or regional liaison or one of the new positions created by the MWGA board of directors restructure. We would love to tap into your strengths and interests as we move MWGA into the future.

Volunteers at the Heart of MWGA

by Darlene Chiles, Volunteer Director

MWGA needs you! It's as simple as that.

Without volunteers, the MWGA wouldn't exist. That's who we are, women who love playing the game of golf and also enjoy volunteering our time to support women's golf. We want to encourage others to join us by becoming more involved this year.

In particular, we can use your help at one of the upcoming Association Days or any of the tournaments throughout the summer. The MGA also holds events that require volunteers, so if one of those tournaments will be in your area, consider signing up to help them.

What would you be volunteering to do? We need you to help register players, be spotters on the course, serve as rules officials and in other areas. If you go to the MWGA web site, www.MWGA-online.org, you can click on "volunteer" to sign up for whichever area would be of interest to you. If you're not into computers, please feel free to call Paula Lutz, MWGA coordinator (952-345-3961), or me (952-443-4042) and we'll add you to our volunteer list. For MGA volunteer activities, check the *Volunteering continued on page 7.*

Laurie Velett
Newsletter Editor

Our New Leadership Structure

by Kim Vanderwall, *President-Elect*

As your governing board, the job of the MWGA Executive Committee is to take care of the organization, make sure everything is shipshape and going smoothly, and see that it will continue to be a proud statement for women's golf for a long time to come. This is a role we step up to proudly - knowing that wonderful women did so before us and equally wonderful women will do so in the future. (Picture your name among them!!!)

We've done two big things in the past year that will really help our organization stay strong and vital.

- 1) We developed a new long-range plan in conversation with all of you. It's an exciting vision of increased visibility, opportunity to connect and leadership.
- 2) We worked with an attorney to revise our by-laws. Most of the revisions are about cleaning up language and getting us in line with current legal standards. But a few are substantial.

This process has been a little like what happens when you repaint a room. Then you think how much better the room would look with new carpeting. And new lighting would really spruce things up, etc., etc. So here we are, based on our recommended by-law changes and the new long-range plan, seeing that our structure as an organization could use some updating as well.

First, in order to clarify legal responsibilities and make it easier for people to volunteer, we've simplified the structure in our by-laws. The "Executive Committee" will now be called the "Board of Directors." This is more commonly what a governing board is called. The group of people we used to call the "Board of Directors" will be called coordinators - more descriptive of what they

have always been. Their new titles will make it clear that they don't bear the legal and fiduciary responsibilities ascribed by state law to a board of directors.

In order to accomplish our new vision and long-range plan, we're reorganizing ourselves to make sure we have our womanpower focused on what you've said you want. We've added an External Relations Director to get the word out about women's golf and the MWGA, as well as an Events Director to develop more opportunities for us all to connect with each other through social/fun golf. Finally, we moved other positions around to ensure focus on supporting new and existing clubs and their liaisons.

As you think about all the fun you've had as part of this organization, please consider stepping forward to marshal it along a little, especially if you have skills with media relations, communications and event planning. We'll be looking to fill our new slots as soon as possible.

Junior Girls' Format Change

The format for the Junior Girls' State Championship has changed slightly; the new format is as follows:

Players with handicap indexes of 8.9 or whose average score is 82 or less shall play in the Championship Flight. A player may elect to play in the Championship Flight, subject to The Committee's approval. After 18 holes, the lowest score and any scores within 10 strokes of the leader or 50% of the Championship Flight, whichever is greater, shall remain in the Championship Flight. The balance of the competitors shall be in the President's Flight. All other players shall be placed in flights according to their handicap indexes or average score.

Don't Forget!

2006 MWGA Annual Membership Meeting and Volunteer Recognition will be held September 18 at **The Jewel Golf Club** in Lake City. Registration information can be found in your yearbook, at www.mwga-online.org, or by contacting the MWGA Office at 952-345-3961.

See you there!

Congratulations!

MWGA Past President, **Ede Rice** was nominated to the USGA Women's Committee this past winter.

Membership Advantages

by Susan Cushman, VP Membership

"Why join the MWGA?" That's a question that hasn't been as easy to answer for recreational golfers as it is for tournament players. Hopefully, that's about to change.

During the off-season, the MWGA executive committee established a goal of improving services to our members who are mainly interested in recreational golf. Since a relatively small percentage of our membership participates in tournaments and association days, we hope to identify other activities and services that would be valued by our members.

This spring, club liaisons distributed surveys to all MWGA clubs, asking individual members to express their interest in a number of possible member offerings. Preliminary results from the survey suggest about half of our members would like to receive MWGA news electronically, especially information about event schedules and upcoming registration deadlines.

Many members expressed interest in more two- or four-women team events and in recreational outings such as scrambles. Among possible workshop topics, a discussion of golf rules was by far the most popular subject. Access to additional MWGA logo items such as clip-on magnetized ball markers, hats/visors or club head covers was of interest to some members.

We will be analyzing survey results in detail over the next several months so we can concentrate our efforts appropriately.

Ultimately, we hope to serve the recreational MWGA players as well as we now serve competitive players. If you did not receive a survey and would like to complete one, please contact Paula Lutz at the MWGA.

Tips & Tactics for Club Liaisons

by Jane Barton, VP Communications

"Promote, Promote, Promote" are the words of veteran MWGA Club Liaison, Shirley Woodfill of **Owatonna Country Club** when asked, "What are your best tips and tactics for being a Club Liaison?"

Shirley has championed women's golf for many years and was happy to share a few of her most successful tips. I have added some of my own and hope that you'll find something you can use to better promote MWGA at your club.

- Put yourself on the agenda at your golf functions, especially during the women's opening and closing mixers. The MWGA Handbook is a great reference. Highlight the tournaments, summer schedule, registration deadlines and membership roster.
- Select a key location for the MWGA Bulletin Board. Use it as a communication tool. I especially like the "Rule of the Month" cards included in your packet of information. We can never have enough reminders about what to do in a hazard!
- Use your local club newsletter and web site for MWGA news. Include photographs from events your group has attended.
- Send out regular e-mail teasers of upcoming events.
- Did I mention accessing the updated MWGA web site? It is very "user-friendly" and packed with information - www.mwga-online.org. You can even register on-line for events.
- Gather a group from your club to attend an Association Day or Spring or Fall Membership Meeting. The more that people participate in MWGA, the more they want to be involved.

Liaisons continued on page 7.

MWGA Foundation Page

MWGA Foundation Awards Five Scholarships In Its Eighth Year of Giving

On behalf of the 2006 Scholarship Committee for the Minnesota Women's Golf Association Foundation, we are very pleased to announce we have selected five recipients who will receive a \$2,000 scholarship to be used towards tuition, books or room and board. The award is renewable for 4 years for a total of \$8,000. The criteria for judging applicants are based on their academic excellence, continued financial need, quality of character demonstrated by civic and academic activities related in their personal statement and interest or involvement in the game of golf.



Heidi Hanson

Heidi graduated from Richfield High School and will be attending the University of Iowa majoring in Audiology and Speech Pathology. She wants to work with hearing and speech deficient people.



Megan Kack

Megan graduated from Minneota High School and will be attending the College of St. Benedict majoring in Pre Dentistry. She would like to become an Orthodontist.



Staci Lieffring

Staci graduated from Two Harbors High School and will be attending the University of Minnesota majoring in Business Management and International Business. She intends to go to Law School after graduation.



Chantel Reisse

Chantel graduated from Lewiston/Altura High School and will be attending the University of Minnesota majoring in Business Management and Physical Therapy. Chantel would like to pursue the medical field in graduate school.



Katarina Wrzos

Katarina graduated from Coon Rapids High School and will be attending the University of Minnesota majoring in Pre Med. She would like to become a Physician or an Optometrist.

Ideas to Try *by Laurie Velett*

Every organization faces the same problem at some point: how do we get more people to join and, once they join, how do we encourage greater participation? The MWGA is addressing this issue and many of our member clubs are doing the same. We asked several clubs what new ideas they are trying to attract women to existing golf leagues and how their current league structure is adapting to accommodate today's women golfers.

We all know how important confidence can be in executing a golf shot. Increasing self-confidence for new women golfers is at the core of a program recently started at **Rochester Golf and Country Club**. The golf staff has implemented a Beginner's League for women who are interested in learning to play or want to improve their skills. It is run somewhat like the junior program, with clinics offered on the full swing, short game, etiquette and rules. Following each clinic, the women play on the club's two practice holes. One of the benefits of the program has been an increase in new members. More importantly, head PGA professional Mark DeBolt, who oversees the Beginner's League, has done a tremendous job of building up self-esteem for RGCC's new golfers.

Minneapolis Golf Club has an 18-hole league that plays two mornings a week and a 9-hole group that plays once a week. To allow working women to participate, any of the individual events can be played at any time during the league day, as long as the player is with another league member. Also, to accommodate players of differing abilities, they include team formats in their event line-up, most of which allow each woman to play her own ball and have a postable score.

In an effort to make new golfers feel more welcome, **Midland Hills Country Club** has scheduled three New Member Thursdays scattered over the first six weeks of the golf

season. Although new members are welcome for all league activities, a special effort is made to invite them for these three events, with a continental breakfast, five-minute Tips with Melanie (assistant golf professional Melanie Schmid), and a 9-hole scramble. So far, six new members have signed up, with several more interested in future events.

To generate some new enthusiasm for their 18-hole golf league and to encourage league members to play with a wider range of people, **Woodhill Country Club** initiated a Miss Congeniality contest last year. The pro shop keeps official track of who has played with whom, but each member also has a bright pink reminder stuck inside her locker door. On it she can record who her "golf buddies" have been so far and be reminded about others who she hasn't played with yet. The prize goes to the individual who has played with the most different people throughout the season. There is a heightened level of enthusiasm for the league these days, with more mixing of players who now feel more comfortable moving outside their usual foursome, and making new friends.

RGCC, Minneapolis and Midland also have informal evening or twilight 9-hole groups to accommodate women who aren't available during the daytime. These casual groups have been very popular at all three clubs, with the players usually gathering for dinner and socializing after golf. As the players say at one club: "No rules, no prizes, just fun."

No doubt there are many other creative ideas being tested out there. We would love to hear about them so we can share them with each other. Send or e-mail your best ideas to the Newsletter Editor at the MWGA office.

The MWGA welcomed two new member clubs over the winter, **Bunker Hills Golf Club** in Coon Rapids and **Meadow Lakes Golf Club** in Rochester.

News You Can Use: The Rules of Golf and DMDs

by Patty Barnacle, VP Rules

Fun MWGA Fact

In 1953, the first dress code was adopted.

No shorts, slacks, halters or pedal pushers allowed in MWGA Competition.

Three years later, the dress code was amended to allow knee length shorts.

One of the hottest topics in the world of golf this year is the use of distance-measuring devices (DMDs). It's been debated in every major golf publication, on internet chat rooms and at the 19th hole of every golf course in town.

The subject has also been thoroughly reviewed by the USGA and the R&A. Although the Rules of Golf still do not allow use of DMDs, these two governing bodies have agreed to add a new decision (14-3/0.5) Local Rule Permitting Use of Distance-Measuring Device. This local rule allows The Committee in charge of a competition the alternative to establish a Local Rule allowing players to use devices that measure distance only (not slope or wind speed, etc.) in their tournaments or championships.

At present the USGA has decided not to adopt the Local Rule for the 2006 season. The USGA feels their courses are well marked for yardage and, in addition, they provide hole location sheets and make available detailed yardage books along with professional caddies for many of their championships. According to a poll published by *Golfweek*, of the 60 state golf associations (includes states that have more than one association), 22 will allow unlimited use of DMDs in 2006, two have not yet decided, 12 will permit limited use, and 24 prohibit the use of DMDs entirely.

At this time the MWGA is following the lead of the USGA and has decided not to adopt the Local Rule permitting the use of distance-measuring devices in MWGA events. The MGA is taking a similar stance. We will continue to monitor this issue throughout the year and will keep our members informed of any policy changes.

Traditionalist or High-Tech Player?

For

The most compelling and most obvious reason to allow use of DMDs is that a player will know with complete accuracy the distance from her ball to the target. This is particularly useful when playing an unfamiliar golf course. And, proponents say, the clear result will be to improve speed of play, always a worthy goal. Detailed yardage information is readily available anyway, in the form of yardage books, distance markers on the course or by using caddies. With the technology boom in golf equipment and with golf courses themselves being built to accommodate better technology, DMDs are just following the high-tech trend.

Against

Golf traditionalists believe that learning to judge distance and which club to use is part of the game. The player's "eye" for distance factors into her game as much as her ability to judge wind, elevation or even reading greens. And, although yardage markers are part of most U.S. golf courses, they measure distance to permanent objects, while rangefinders measure the distance to an individual's ball. As for improving pace of play, the traditionalist sees the club player who is in the same spot on the golf course she has been in countless times before, and yet she pulls out a rangefinder to find the exact yardage. If everyone in her foursome is doing the same thing for every shot, it will certainly slow play. Others argue that the cost is prohibitive for some golfers or that a player without a DMD is at a competitive disadvantage.

Meet Allison Westfall



Part of the MWGA's tournament success each year is due to the qualified interns who have been part of our team. Each year the MWGA hires an intern using funds provided by the PJ Boatwright,

Jr. Internship Grant from the USGA. The 2006 PJ Boatwright Intern is Allison Westfall. Allison will be responsible for a variety of duties related to planning and running MWGA events throughout the summer.

Allison is completing her junior year at the University of Wisconsin - Madison and is majoring in consumer science with a minor in business. A resident of Edina, she brings some great experience from interning in the athletic department at UW. After graduation, her career goal is to work in the field of sports marketing or sports management. As an Edina High School student, she was a member of the tennis team and captain of the golf team.

Liaisons continued from page 4.

- Coordinate rides/hotel accommodations for tournaments. Remind fellow golfers to bring rain gear, sunscreen and cash.
- Support the MWGA Foundation. Shirley's club has a Lottery Tree where chances are sold and a drawing is held to choose a winner. At my club, we encourage our golf members to gift jointly to the MWGA Foundation and the Evan's Scholarship Fund.
- Attend a MWGA Board of Directors monthly meeting.
- Watch for updates included in the Club Connection, an e-mail recap of the board meetings, and share it with your club members.

Remember: Promote, promote, promote!

Front continued from page 1.

Postcards: Last year we started sending postcards for tournament reminders. The response was positive so we will continue sending them as the need arises. This is both cost-effective and timely.

Survey: Communication goes both ways and the survey that went out this spring is your opportunity to tell us what you think the MWGA should work on. We want your input so please take the time to fill out the survey, if you haven't already (see story on page 4).

Liaisons: Club and Regional Liaisons continue to be the backbone of our communication plan, as they are the face of the MWGA to our members. On page 4, you can read about some of the ways these valuable liaisons connect with members in their areas.

Volunteering continued from page 2.

web site and call tournament director Doug Hoffmann at (952) 345-3963.

What do you get out of it? Most people who have volunteered their time in the past have been very happily surprised at how much fun they had. At tournaments, there's an opportunity to see some really good golf, up close and personal. You will meet new people and make new friends. And there is always that good feeling inside, knowing you've done your part to support women's golf in Minnesota.

There is also a tangible reward for your time and effort! The Annual Fall Membership Meeting will once again include recognition of our many volunteers by offering golf and dinner at no charge to those who have volunteered eight hours or more during the 2006 season. This year's meeting at one of our newest member clubs - The Jewel in Lake City - promises to be a real treat. The MGA will have a similar volunteer appreciation event at Windsong Farm.

Thank you for considering MWGA as a place to volunteer. Have a great season!

MGA Associate Members' Day

Format: 2 of 4 net best ball.

Field Limit: 30 teams of 4.

Entry Deadline: 2 weeks prior to the event.

Must be a MGA Associate Member to participate.

Entry fee for each event includes golf, hors d'oeuvres, range balls, prizes and a great time.

June 26

St. Cloud CC

\$240 per team

July 31

Hillcrest GC of

St. Paul

\$320 per team

August 21

Northland CC

\$300 per team

September 25

Rochester G&CC

\$260 per team

Please contact Joel, 952-345-3968 at the MGA Office for entry forms and further information.

Minnesota Women's Golf Association
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Postage Permit

F.P.O.



Questions? Comments?

Please contribute your ideas to the following Board
and Staff members:

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VP Membership **Susan Cushman**

VP Tournaments **Trish Anderson**

VP Rules **Patty Barnacle**

Volunteer Director **Darlene Chiles**

Newsletter Editor **Laurie Velett**

Women's Coordinator
Paula Lutz

www.MWGA-online.org

2006 MWGA Event Schedule

May Association Day Marshall GC	May 22
MWGA Senior Four-Ball Baker National GC	June 5-6
MGA/MWGA/MWPGA Mid-Am Owatonna CC	June 11-12
June Association Day Bent Creek GC, Mendakota CC, University GC	June 13
Four-Ball Championship Medina G&CC	June 22-23
MWGA Mid-Handicap/Net Team Faribault G&CC	June 26
Match Play Championship Town & Country Club	July 11-14
Junior Girls' State Championship Izaty's G&YC	July 24-25
Women's State Amateur Rochester G&CC	August 14-16
August Association Day Oakcrest GC	August 22
Sr. Women's State Amateur Austin CC	August 28-29