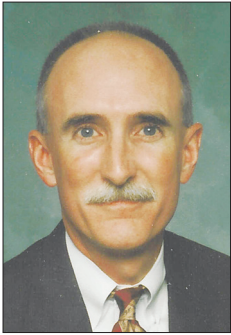


Membership revisited (Who are we anyway?)

By CARR McCALLA

One of the LGA's biggest challenges is how best to tell our story. Even our own constituency sometimes doesn't really know who we are and what we do!

We published a position statement in this column a couple of years ago about what it meant to be a member of the LGA and I've been asked on a number of occasions to reprint that column.



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The following paragraphs, while not verbatim from that column two years ago, will contain some of the same information. We want people to see the LGA as a partner in introducing our great game to newcomers, in helping the longtime golfer understand and value what the game brings to his/her life, and in protecting the traditions and values of the game itself.

Over the course of the last 12 years, the LGA has grown from an organization that simply existed to conduct its statewide amateur championships, to a full-service state golf association. While we provide numerous peripheral benefits and services to our 110 Member Clubs and approximately 20,000 individual members, our core services include the following:

- The provision of USGA approved course and slope rating services to all Louisiana golf courses. These services, valued at \$2,500 minimum, are free to LGA Member Clubs. The LGA is the only organization in Louisiana licensed by the USGA to provide these services. Administration of 26 LGA Championship events and LGA and USGA qualifiers. This, our original service, is still an extremely important one and we continually strive to upgrade the competitive experience for our tournament players.

- The LGA provides oversight and administration of the USGA Handicap System in Louisiana. Again, just as with course and slope rating services, the LGA is the only organization licensed by the USGA to provide handicapping services to clubs in Louisiana.

- Upholding the integrity of the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Amateur Status. If you have a rules question or are concerned about whether some activity might violate the rules of amateur status, we're the organization you're going to call.

These services are the nucleus of what we do. Without the LGA and its services there would be no benchmark from which to compute a USGA Handicap Index (your Handicap Index is based upon the USGA course and slope rating system) nor would there be an entity to oversee the Amateur game in Louisiana. And, while the LGA has no formal tie to the USGA, they sincerely look to us to govern the Amateur game here. We are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the game and its valued traditions. Just as the USGA carries out these responsibilities on a national level, we do the same in our area of jurisdiction (i.e., Louisiana).

These core services are extremely important to the maintenance of the game we all love and, the LGA is committed to upholding our responsibilities in all of these areas. As we mentioned earlier,

we also feel a strong responsibility to create additional access to the game for our new players and our longtime members; as well as to create additional value-added services and benefits to our Member Clubs and individual members.

We continue to try to find ways to enhance the value of LGA membership. In 2006 we began a partnership with the Audubon Golf Trail (AGT) to provide a discount card for our individual members that will allow them to receive a free cart fee at 12 of the AGT courses each year (a \$180 value). We have also partnered with Bushnell in creating an opportunity for our LGA individual members to receive a substantial discount off the purchase of a Bushnell laser rangefinder. If a member's club also participates in the LGA Handicap Network, they'll receive an even bigger discount on the purchase of a rangefinder. For clubs that participate in the LGA Handicap Network, we provide a computer, touch-screen monitor, label printer, report printer, and handicapping and tournament management system software. There's no denying the LGA Handicap Network has had a tremendously positive impact on the integrity and credibility of handicaps statewide.

We have also recently revamped our website at www.LGAgolf.org, making it more user friendly.

If you've not visited the LGA's site recently, please come take a look. The LGA website exists to provide visitors with information about the game, and in particular, golf in Louisiana.

On our site, you may register online for our Championships, follow LGA Championship events with our real-time on-line scoreboard, search for course information on LGA Member Clubs in our course directory, review your (and your cronies') handicap information and post a score on-line if you're a LGA Handicap Network participant, and much more.

In addition to all of these programs, the LGA conducts seminars on such topics as handicapping, course rating, rules, etiquette, and other subjects that our constituency feels important. We also liaison with our many allied golf associations 'for the good of the game.'

For most of the benefits and services that we've listed above, there's really no revenue component. Unfortunately, we don't have the TV rights revenues coming our way that the USGA does. Therefore, in order to continue to provide the benefits and services that are so critical to the health of our game in Louisiana, we ask our clubs, and individual members in those clubs, to fund what we do. Our annual dues total \$150 per club plus \$12 per year per member (plus an additional \$4 per year per member if your club participates in the LGA Handicap Network). That means if you're a member of a LGA Member Club, you have an ownership stake in the LGA and are investing in the future of the game in Louisiana. On the surface, it looks like a pretty good deal. Look a little deeper and the value gets even better. For a dollar a month you get \$180 worth of value with our Audubon Golf Trail discount card alone. Use it only once and you've more than recouped your annual individual dues. In addition, your club gains all the benefits of LGA membership, i.e., course and slope rating services (a minimum \$2,500 value), a computer hardware and software package if you're a LGA Handicap Network participant club, etc., etc.

But the real bang for your buck comes in helping us do what



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