

Questions and Answers With Rick Traver, CGCS



positions of Secretary, Vice-president and now President.

Detail three industry issues you have watched develop and suggest how the MGCSA has addressed them or should tackle them in the future.

1) The economic yoyo we have been on since 9/11:

Whether we like it, or not, the golf boom in the 80s and 90s created too many courses and

some will need to close for the rest to be strong. How that is determined will be supply and demand on the golfer's part, and management on the golf industries part. For the MGCSA, we need to be there to support the guys/gals whose jobs are casualties of that change, and since there will be less opportunities for people to move up, we need to keep the assistants and support staff engaged in the association.

2) The green movement: This is going to be hard because many that are involved in this see us as the enemy and don't look at the facts. We need to find a way to educate them on how we are the people they want on their side and how valuable the golf industry is in recycling carbon dioxide and cooling the planet. I do believe we have done a great job of getting our message out to the golfers, but the non-golfers in many cases are not hearing our story.

3) Legislative controls: Since I have been in the industry the control and regulations on many aspects of our industry have tightened dramatically. We have seen pesticides disappear as well as tighter controls on fertilizers, but the worst is going to be if the government starts to get aggressive about controlling our use of water. Again, like the green movement, it appears that things are done for political reasons and often times the change or regulations make things worse instead of better. All we can do from an MGCSA perspective is continue to try and educate, and to make connections with our political leaders, and get more involved.

You are a husband, father, association President, General Manager, community volunteer and Golf Course Superintendent. Do you have any

time for your own relaxation and if so, what do you do?

I used to play a lot of golf. It was my hobby and my primary form of relaxation, along with watching sports or playing them. However, now that has changed an awful lot. I have to make myself play in a golf league so my game doesn't totally deteriorate. Now relaxation comes with, camping with my wife, daughter and dog, walks with the family (we are blessed in that we have a lot of county and state parks nearby), watching my daughter's sporting events, and working around the house.

Place yourself 10 years into the future. Where do you hope to be in your life timeline? Where do you hope the MGCSA will be?

Myself, I will be retired from the industry. The worst part about being the general manager is that you have to bite your tongue quite a bit, and just fight the important fights. That can really wear you down, and draw out the enthusiasm you have for your job. I will still be working, but look for me to be at Home Depot or a garden center some place. I will also be planning trips with my wife. By then my daughter should be finishing up college and we plan on seeing some of the U. S. and beyond.

As for the MGCSA, I can't see it going anyplace but up. We are a strong association with members that impress me all the time. The knowledge, diversity and creativity of the people that become superintendents are amazing. I believe that because of these qualities, no matter what obstacle is thrown in our path we will adjust and flourish.

Name one author, one politician and one personal friend whom you would enjoy touring the links of Scotland with. What would you discuss?

The author would be Pat Jones, (*I really think he says it like it is*), the politician would be Michelle Bachman, (*if she golfs but whether you agree with her or not you have to admire that she sticks to her principles*) and the personal friend would be my brother Vince, (*We have always been close and shared many golfing experiences*).

How and why did you become involved in the leadership activities of the MGCSA?

I have always believed that you should participate in your community, and while I believe that, I wasn't actively pursuing a position on the Board of Directors with the MGCSA. However, when Jim Nicol, CGCS called me 10 years ago, I felt it would be a great opportunity for me to meet more members and put in a couple years of service for our association. Little did I know my tenure would last 10 plus years - although it has been a great 10 years so far!

What MGCSA changes have you been a part of during your time on the Board of Directors?

While on the board we have seen a number of changes. We gained and lost a pathologist at the U of M. We contributed to the building of the TROE Center at the U of M. We have had some potentially great opportunities that would have had us managing some smaller courses in an effort to aid turf research with funds and an area to do the research. We have also joined forces, through the MTGE, with the MNLA to combine the turf conference, making it a bigger conference with a great opportunity for education. During my tenure as President things have been a little quieter. We have been focused on maintaining the membership as well as creating new and more opportunities to get together.

Describe your Committee participation through the years.

I have served on the Bylaws & Historical, Editorial, Membership and Research committees. I have also held the