



Bullets from the Boardroom



MAAGCS Secretary - Nick Vance, CGCS

Recently I was in Lawrence, Kansas to attend my sixth voting delegates meeting. It seems each year we have learned more and become more in tune with what is going on at GCSAA headquarters, but I don't think I have ever seen as many representatives leave the meeting with such a strong feeling of pride in their association. That pride came in the realization that our association and its leaders are not only striving to take us to the top in the quest to be the best environmentalists possible, but they are making sure that the rest of the world knows it.

Over the last couple of years there has been a lot of speculation about member standards. I am happy to say the plans to set standards are in motion. The Board of Directors of GCSAA is not going to rush the process. They are looking for the best possible plan to put in motion to improve our image and our professional worth.

Another reason to feel pride is the fact that we have so many very qualified people running for office this year. During my visit there we were permitted to visit with all the candidates for a couple of hours. I spent that time walking from room to room. Talking to all the candidates and listening to all the questions asked of them by all the delegates. At the end of that evening I was convinced we have a very good slate. Every candidate has something to offer and they all seem very anxious to be part of the process.

I would like all of you to read the information that will be coming out to you in the next couple of months and if you have any questions about the candidates please call me. I believe that the incumbents have done a good job during their terms and should be given the chance to move up, but at this time I am not convinced who should be elected to the open position.

As part of the opening message from the president there were a few statements made that I thought might be of interest:

- We now have 17 standing committees and 4 resource groups with 216 members serving those committees.
- You are not "agronomic advisors" but you are the agronomic expert.
- One major point to come out of the Stanford Research Institute Study is that many of our employers THINK they understand our

profession and our role, but REALLY do not. We need to help them understand. It's up to us to sell ourselves to our employers.

- Our relationships in golf-as an association-are the best they've ever been, especially with our allied associations. Our first major responsibility is to prove ourselves WORTHY of the image we want to portray. We want "brand" recognition. That must be our goal. To say you are a member MUST mean something, but for it to be meaningful, it must be supported by merit. It must say, you as a member adhere to a set of criteria established by your professional peers. It must say that you have been judged by your peers and found worthy. This goal of "brand" recognition cannot be achieved without members standards and chapter affiliations that have substance. We need criteria that will provide our employers a measured, tested standard against which we can be judged.

- Achieving such "brand" recognition cannot be done without funds. One of the most asked questions this year has been "why is GCSAA selling itself out to sponsorship." It would be nice to provide our members with the current level of support, AND do it solely on dues and association revenues, but the money just isn't there to even continue the current level of member support. GCSAA leaders, both past and present, have coldly weighed the pros and cons of this argument. Weighed it from the viewpoint of our mission statement: "Dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession and enriching the quality of golf and its environment." To even HOPE to achieve that goal we have to be a player in the game. You can only play if the other players see you as a worthy participant. This is BRAND recognition. The greater the degree of recognition the greater the role played. To reach that level requires public relations and education initiatives. This in turn requires funding, funding that despite our best efforts cannot be derived from in-house efforts. Therefore, the decision was made to seek sponsorship. These sponsors have partnered with us to aid us in our growth as a profession. In return for their generosity, these Partners/Sponsors take a chance that in supporting our association, our members will in turn support them. Simply put, they receive advertising (their ability to link their corporate name to ours) in return for their funding. "Brand" recognition is not just a national mindset. It needs to be local and regional as well.

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