



Don Cross
President, MAGCS

As I begin this column, it is a bright and clear day in late February; and in spite of the single digit temperature, the radiant sunshine is a welcome sight. After a winter of widely fluctuating conditions and records on both ends of the scale, it's pleasing to know that by the time you receive this, climactic conditions will have moderated (at least I'm optimistic), and we will be beginning another busy golf season. Time to put the plans, efforts, and education of the past few months and the knowledge of last year's experiences into effect. I wish the entire Midwest membership the best in all of your activities and endeavors in this new season.

I hope one of your educational opportunities of the past winter season included attendance at the GCSAA Conference and Show. My speculation in last month's column was on target, but the outcome of certain events and the overall success of the conference bears repeating. From the golf tournament, seminars, and the opening session, to the environmental general session, concurrent sessions, the trade show, and everything in between, all was truly conducted in a first-class manner. The efforts of the entire GCSAA staff and the officers and directors are to be commended. Experiencing this event can only make one proud to be in this profession and associated with our national organization.

Pride for the MAGCS membership was ever-present. From the Midwest field of over 40 golf tournament competitors, approximately 25 percent received individual

awards. Well done, fellas! At the environmental general session, Tim Kelly received, for the second year in a row, the National Environmental Stewardship Award. An outstanding achievement once, extraordinary twice! Also at this session, Peter Leuzinger (a regional Environmental Stewardship Award winner) joined several panelists in a lively debate regarding the impact of golf courses on the environment. His comments had to help the environmental extremist panelists gain better insight into the many benefits our golf courses provide. Al Fierst gave a very professional and informative presentation on image and received some favorable press in the following day "Showtime" newspaper. And lastly, as you all probably know by now, Bruce Williams was elected to the GCSAA presidency. Our national association is unquestionably in good hands! Congratulations to all of you (and others I may have missed) and thank you for giving the entire MAGCS membership an elevated sense of pride and accomplishment.

To digress back to the environmental general session, I believe a valuable lesson was learned during the panel discussion. Those of you who attended will remember a certain environmental advocate (whose appearance could have easily discredited him) and a product manufacturer's representative (who clearly knew many of the actual facts of research results). As the debate continued, the manufacturer's rep became rather defensive while the advocate calmly stated his opinions. As the discussion progressed further, I found myself becoming more inclined to listen to the advocate's viewpoint rather than the harsh, adversarial viewpoint of the manufacturer's rep. The representative obviously knew the real story of the minimal impact that plant protectants have on our environment, when used in a conscientious man-

ner according to label guidelines, and had the perfect opportunity to make these points known. Had he responded differently, the advocate may not have come across as convincingly as he did. The take-home lesson here is obvious. When confronted by an irrational, strongly opinionated party, we must maintain our composure and calmly state the facts to the best of our knowledge rather than becoming confrontational. Listening to other's concerns and working together to reach a mutually beneficial result will go much farther than building barriers. Our livelihood may depend on it!

At the GCSAA Annual Meeting, the bylaws were overwhelmingly passed providing for the Chapter Affiliation process. Your MAGCS Board of Directors has already begun to organize the necessary documents to submit to GCSAA. We want to be at the forefront in acquiring the Affiliated status and are working toward this goal. I'll keep you posted as to our progress.

As spring unfolds, be sure to take time to enjoy the warming sunshine, the floral display of the spring bulbs, and the pleasant notes of the returning songbirds. Enjoy while you can because summer, with all its unpredictability and inevitable challenges, will be here before we know it. Hopefully, it will not be a repeat of last year.

Dust off those sticks and join us this month at Klein Creek for the first event of the 1996 MAGCS golf season.

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