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I am putting this column together a few days prior to the annual GCSAA Conference. I hope everyone enjoyed our industry's enormous educational opportunity. I am beginning my fourth year as a member of the MAGCS Board of Directors, and looking back, the responsibilities seem to have steadily increased. I really enjoy my increased level of involvement in our association and appreciate the support of the other board members and the membership as a whole.

President Czerkies handed me the reins on the Golf Committee this year. Actually, he wrapped the reins around my neck long before he was even president. When that Starr fellow is finished investigating the Lewinsky/Clinton affair, I think I'll have him look into this. I'm not sure Kevin can hand out assignments six months before his presidency starts. The committee consists of several veterans and a few new volunteers. To date, we have met once, and I hope we can continue doing the great job that Luke's committees have made a standard the past two seasons.

The biggest favor the Golf Committee will ask the membership for is to sign up as early as possible for our monthly meet-

ings. Remember, registration is on a first-signed-up, first-paid basis. As a reminder, you can register via fax with a credit card and, who knows, maybe through the Internet soon. Your early registration allows us to be much more organized on our end and, consequently, increases the chances of you having an enjoyable day at the course. Sorry, we can't do anything about that lousy slice!

We have no major changes planned for the golf events; no sense messing with success. You'll see a few new prize ideas and one or two new wrinkles regarding the event formats. The committee had some interesting ideas, and we'll see how you like them. As a token suggestion, consider signing up solo at a golf meeting this year and risk playing with someone you don't know. It might give you the opportunity to make a newer

member feel more welcome or might introduce you to that person who carries that product you've been looking for. Or perhaps you won't get anything out of the day except a new friend. Most of all, sign up early, play often and enjoy yourself!

By the time you read this, the GCSAA Conference and the annual hospitality room will be history. I've been busy putting the details together; and, hopefully, the event will be on par with the previous year's effort in Las Vegas. The support from our commercial members was again outstanding. We could not put this together without their financial encouragement. That goes for the monthly golf meetings as well!

Lastly, we are looking into the possibility of the MAGCS having their own web site. The

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## Planning for the Future: . . .

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porting University research, the United States Golf Association has developed a strong competitive research program, and state turfgrass foundations have increased their fund-raising activities.

While research is very important to advancing our industry, we must remember that universities provide several other important functions in addition to research. Undergraduate education is a very important mission of each university, and we would argue that training top-quality students is the lifeblood of the turfgrass industry. Many superintendents complain about the numbers of students training to be superintendents. How shortsighted! This is the sign of a vital, growing industry. It also creates competition, which most people agree is good for the industry.

Universities also provide continuing education, an area that may change dramatically in the future as the Internet shapes the way information is transmitted. At the University of Illinois, we currently develop and present an annual turfgrass field day, the NCTE, and Illinois-Indiana turfgrass short course. A web page was recently developed; and publications such as the "Turfgrass Tips," extension bulletins, and other written documents are all part of the U of I outreach program.

We think it is clear that the turfgrass industry will look much different 20 years from now than it does today. Where should the Illinois turfgrass industry fit in the national and international scene? Do we want to be one of the leading industries in the country? Most people would say yes to that question.

Our question to you is how do we get there from here? We want your input; you can reach us by phone, fax, or e-mail with your comments. Thank you for your help on this important project.

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## Director's Column

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groundwork was laid already; the MAGCS call letters have been reserved for us when we are ready to have our own site. This is certainly not my area of expertise, and I'm pestering pros like Nick Hongisto for help. If any other Internet surfers would care to lend their experience, please give me a call. I hope we'll be online before the season gets into full gear.

In closing, I hope 1998 is a good year for everyone. Enjoy the last little bit of the off-season, and we'll see you at the first golf event on April 27 at Schaumburg Golf Club, the annual opening scramble. ■

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