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What an exciting time for me, to be entering the new millennium as your president. I would like to thank all of you for your support, past and present. It is truly an honor to be given this opportunity to lead the Midwest at this challenging time of change. The world around us is changing rapidly, and it is inevitable that the MAGCS will experience growth and change as well. Our task as your Board of Directors is to put a positive and beneficial spin on all the opportunities presented to the Association.

I would like to take this space to thank all of the directors over the past seven years for their time and talents. It has been a winning team year after year. A special thanks to Past President Kevin Czerkies and Directors Jim McNair and Dan Anderson as they will be departing from the Board this year. On behalf of the entire membership, I thank you for your contributions and dedication.

We, as a Board, are looking forward to this year; we have many projects in the works that will strengthen and grow our Association. I would like to thank the "old-timers" if I may, and they know who they are. Through their continuing hard work and perseverance, many of us came by the opportunities we have today. The golf course superintendent has become a "player" in the industry. Opportunities are present in our jobs for advancement and recognition, both of which are deserved. We know the golf course is the engine of every facility. It was through noble past efforts that we climbed, and it will be our future efforts that will continue to enhance our profession.

This leads me to the challenge I would like to present. This challenge is for you. I know the Board is capable of running the day-to-day grind of the Association with contributions from our executive secretary, George Minnis, and editor, Cathy Miles Ralston. The energy needs to come from the membership, all classes of members. Please ask yourself what you have to donate to your Association. What are your talents, passions or time allowances? Every one of us has something to give. Are you giving back for what you take out? I know we ask this every year. Even at church, generally only one month of the year do they ask for your tithing, and this is that month. As the Association grows, more exists to be done. So:

- Write an article.
- Host a meeting.
- Participate on a committee.
- Propose new ideas.
- Help with the survey distribution this year.

- Offer solutions to old problems.
- Create new problems.
- Promote the MAGCS.
- Educate and network.

It is an old philosophy but still an accurate one: The Association will only be as good as the membership allows it to be. The MAGCS is one of the best tools we have to use in our industry. Let us then use it to the best of our ability. We have a strong voice regionally as well as nationally. Keep in mind that this Association belongs to us—its members—not the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is a group of dedicated volunteers entrusted with the operation of the Association. I, along with the rest of the Board, will have an open door policy to hear your grievances and concerns. I encourage everyone to voice his or her opinions. This is what has gotten us where we are.

That is your challenge; I sincerely hope you all accept it and act on it. I promise to listen to all takers. I also promise not to bring it up again this year. (I will have to write a past president's column next year, though.)

As the holiday season is upon us, I would like to remind everyone to keep their priorities in order and use December for some good quality family time. May the spirit of the season be upon you and your family, and God bless.

