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Winter is here, and we can all relax. Right? There is a common misconception that we all kick back and hibernate in the winter months. I'm sure you've all been asked dozens of times, "So, what do you do in the winter?" My standard reply is that we attempt to reduce our work week to approximately 45 hours, if possible. Between administrative duties, educational seminars, equipment maintenance, planning meetings, supervising winter sports, and construction projects (which don't cease with the onset of snow and freezing temperatures), our winter schedules can be nearly as demanding as the summer months.

All of these functions are important to our employers in continuing to improve the facilities that we are given the opportunity to maintain and enhance. They are also important to our personal growth. Being an active participant, especially in educational offerings, strengthens our skills. Many of us will soon be departing for the International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando. It is a great opportunity for everyone to enhance their skills through the

education offered. I feel it is just as important for us to have the opportunity to get together with other industry professionals to trade ideas and build networks of knowledge. We don't operate in a vacuum, so the chance to discuss common problems with peers from other regions or countries is always enlightening.

As a side bar, when you talk to superintendents from other regions, please remember that MAGCS member Tommy Witt, CGCS is running for secretary/ treasurer on the GCSAA Board of Directors. Tommy is a well qualified candidate who has worked tirelessly on behalf of this profession. Any help that we can receive from other chapters in getting Tommy elected will be appreciated.

Locally, you may already be aware that we sizably increased our annual donation to the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation. This was done for several reasons. I have felt for a number of years that the MAGCS operating procedure of making a token donation to the ITF and putting the bulk of our available funds into independent research funding was counterproductive. The MAGCS was not in a position to make qualified decisions on what projects would be funded based on scientific procedure. As a result, these decisions were often made in the past based on a personal relationship with the proposer or wide-eyed enthusiasm over what results we hoped to obtain without knowing whether or not we could reproduce those results in the field. We also, admittedly, have not had the best of relationships with the ITF in the past. Without going into detail, the MAGCS felt that there were internal concerns at ITF that needed to be addressed before we could show significant support.

Recently, Randy Wahler, CGCS and Don Cross, CGCS, representing the ITF Board of Directors, met with the MAGCS Board of Directors to discuss the relationship between our two associations and to talk about the changes that have occurred at ITF. The MAGCS board was very impressed by the changes that have been made, particularly in the areas of oversight and accountability. So impressed, in fact, that we have voted to funnel the bulk of our research funding through them. We will, however, honor any existing independent research funding agreements which we currently have. We will also review this relationship on an annual basis to be certain that our membership's donation is being used to its greatest benefit.

Be assured that we are participants in the investigatory process of determining how the research funds will be spent. The ITF has asked for our assistance in this area, and I would encourage any MAGCS member who is interested in participating on an ITF research review committee to contact Randy Wahler to inquire about the availability of openings. Your participation will strengthen our position.

I hope to see you in Orlando. While there, don't forget to thank Brian Bossert and all of our commercial member supporters for what I'm sure will be another spectacular MAGCS hospitality room.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bob Maibusch".

*Bob Maibusch, CGCS, MG
President, MAGCS*