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Home hole! This may be self-indulgent, but in my last President's Message I want to say some words of thanks and wax a bit nostalgic on what this year and this profession mean to me.

In no order, thanks to the rest of the members of the Board of Directors and the MAGCS staff. Collectively, we have enjoyed a synergism that has made us more than the sum of our individual parts. Thanks to my wife Cheryl, daughter Alex and son Kieron, whose love inspires and teaches me every day. Thanks to my parents, who taught me that getting involved and giving something back, whether it be to your church, your community, your profession or any worthy cause, is both a privilege and an obligation of good fortune. Thanks to all of the many golf course superintendents who have taught me over the years but particularly those that I was honored to work under: Leon Hartough, Alan Fierst and especially Dave Ward, my mentors and, more importantly, my friends. Thanks to the wonderful staff I am privileged to work with every day at Hinsdale Golf Club. I am so very proud of their efforts.

They always make us look good. Thanks to the Hinsdale Golf Club for letting me grow by suffering through my mistakes. Thanks to the Evans Scholars Foundation for allowing me to fulfill my career dream through education. Thanks to Tim Stare, my best friend since we began caddying together at age 12 and one of my moral compasses. Thanks to Tom Watson. One magical week in 1974 caddying for Tom as he won his first professional tournament at the Western Open made me realize how much I loved being on the golf course and inspired me to look for a way to make golf my profession.

During a particularly frustrating period in my career when I was an assistant but hadn't had any success in garnering a superintendent's position, I seriously thought of walking away and trying to get on the Tour as a caddie. A couple of thoughtful words on Tom's part dissuaded me from that career move and shortly thereafter I was lucky enough to secure my current position. Was it fate? I don't know the answer to that question, but I do know this—throughout the years, Tom has continued to impress and inspire me. Aside from his achievements on the golf course, which have been nothing short of spectacular, it is the character of the man that has meant so much to me. If we're lucky, there are a handful of people who enter our lives that have a profound, lasting, positive effect. For me, Tom Watson has been one of those people.

A recent issue of *Greenkeeper International* magazine contained a line that really hit home: "Greenkeeping is the art of applying science." How true. To me, true art is an outgrowth of passion. Some superintendents have a passion for horticulture, turf

cultivation or championship conditioning. My passion has always been rooted in the simple act of being on the golf course and contributing to the game of golf. I have since learned to love what I do, and the art of science it takes to do it successfully.

I was drawn to this profession out of a love for the spirit and principles that the game fosters. It's why I also study the martial arts. Both require internal audits, self-motivation and conduct in the way of the warrior. Rarely do you hear a superintendent say that something cannot be accomplished. We are a profession of achievers. It is our heritage and our spirit. This profession, for me, has been a means to an end. An opportunity to serve the game that has done so much for me.

I liken the golf course superintendent profession to that of a major league sports coach. Twenty years of winning seasons mean very little during the one year that you are on the losing end. It may be unfair and frustrating, but it is also one of the constant challenges that push us to even greater heights.

Some people ask why we do it. The long hours, the uncertain future, the frequently unwarranted and uneducated criticism. I am reminded of a quote by my favorite President, Theodore Roosevelt:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly...who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in

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A Firsthand Account: The 1999 GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting

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I recently returned from the chapter delegates meeting held September 10-12 at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, KS. Also in attendance was the MAGCS alternate delegate, Don Cross, CGCS.

This annual get-together gives every chapter the opportunity to meet and discuss issues one-on-one with the candidates for national office. It is also an opportune time to discuss relevant association matters, both current and anticipated.

We received updates on the state of the association, which remains good. Some of the other

issues that came up for discussion were the continued public/media relations effort, compensation and benefits surveys, the Food Quality Protection Act, limited budget outreach program, GCSAA 75th anniversary planning and the possibility of an association name change.

The issue that generated the most discussion was the Professional Development Initiative (PDI). In a nutshell, this movement began under the name of Membership Standards. It has involved a significant amount of investigation by standing and ad hoc GCSAA committees and outside consultants. The intent of the PDI is to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of the professional superintendent that will

contribute towards improved playing conditions and enhanced enjoyment of the game of golf. It will likely require a revamping of our current education offerings.

The implications of PDI have generated a lot of speculation. Many of your questions will be answered during a presentation to the membership at an upcoming monthly meeting. We are currently considering the January 2000 MAGCS monthly meeting to accomplish this. Plenty of time for membership input and debate is available prior to PDI's implementation, which is not expected until after the 2001 international conference. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Don Cross or me.



On Course With the President

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the end the triumph of his achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have known neither victory nor defeat."

My interpretation: Whatever doesn't kill you will make you stronger.

For those who love the game, there is nothing quite like being alone on a golf course at the beginning or end of a day. If nature is God's handiwork, then we are blessed to have the oppor-

tunity to enhance the nature of the facilities that we are entrusted with managing. On the days when I can enjoy the quiet of the golf course, it is easy to remember how lucky I am to participate in this profession. These cathedrals of nature, like churches, continue to be a refuge where people can come, if only for a short respite, to put their troubles behind them, and find that inner peace that we all desire.

Thank you for trusting me enough to allow me to lead this association. It was a privilege I never took lightly and one that I will always be humbled by. I know that by serving, I received much

more than I could possibly have given. Judging by your comments, I believe that we moved forward this past year, but if my direction or opinions incited even one critic who became incensed enough to get involved, then I know that my endeavors were successful. It has truly been a pleasure and an honor. Now onto the ultimate career goal: to survive long enough in this business to be considered a curmudgeon. See you on the first tee.

