



*Fred Behnke
Mount Prospect G.C.*

The chair assignments of the 1998 version of the MAGCS Board of Directors find me with the Editorial Committee—scary isn't it. Really though, I'm honored to be entrusted with assisting our capable editor, Fred Opperman, in producing the magazine you are currently reading. Some of the members of our association belong to MAGCS solely because *On Course* comes with the price of admission. I know everyone enjoys getting it, and if you are like me, it's the first thing opened and read in that day's mail. *On Course* is the voice of the MAGCS; and since we've begun sending it to other course officials, our readership is wider than it has ever been.

It has been a couple of years since *the Bull Sheet* became *On Course* along with the attendant improvement in production quality, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention the incredible contribution Jim McNair, the outgoing editorial committee chairman, had in making the vision of the Board of Directors into a reality. He and the Editorial Committee that he put together (Dan Anderson, John Gurke, Randy Kane, Mike Mumper, Pat Norton, Ray Shmitz, Paul Yerkes and, this year, Luke Cella) deserve

a lot of credit along with Fred and Mark, our graphic artist, in taking *On Course* through the growing pains of the first years.

I am grateful for the continued participation of the Editorial Committee members, and I will work to ensure that our publication continues to meet our membership's expectations.

My previous experience in publishing was limited to throwing newspapers on porches when I was a kid. Suspecting this, President Czerkies asked me if I would attend the chapter newsletter editor's workshop in Anaheim at the National. Fred and I both attended (Fred for the umpteenth time, me for the first), and I was exposed to valuable insights shared by newsletter editors from around the nation.

There are several problems that all the attendees had in common, the first being those related to production, deadlines, ad copy, postage—that sort of thing. I had no idea of the complexity of producing a publication the size and quality of *On Course*, and I still don't really understand the whole gamut (don't get hit by a bus, Fred).

I could relate to the second problem. Each and every newsletter editor in that room, from the superintendent who whipped out a two-pager each month all by himself to the guy from Florida who, along with his staff, published in excess of 100 pages every month, complained about how hard it was to get their members to contribute original articles. Some of the guys (and girls—many editors are of the female persuasion) had some pretty clever

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To Cover or Not to Cover
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greens nearest oak trees that were shaded had developed disease; and yet, on greens 20 feet away where the sun hit the greens, they would be fine. At Oak Park C.C., Al also used covers on some tees. He covers the first tee and all of the par 3 tees. He states that inevitably some golfers must hit balls during the winter, and the first tee would always take a large beating. Also, golfers like to hit balls to a target, which is generally the green. He used to put snow fence and

ropes around the par 3 tees and to the par 3 greens, but then members thought it was a great sport to hit balls over the snow fence. In closing, Al said the use of covers helps the tees to regenerate turf and also effectively discourages and/or shuts down unwanted play!

There are many ways to skin a cat, and you must decide what works best for your situation at the course where you work. I believe that this little article offers insights on covers and the many different thoughts

and uses of covers from some successful superintendents in the Chicago area.

In closing, I would like to thank Tim Davis, Al Fierst, and last, but not least, my father for their thoughts, insights, and time. ■

Director's Column
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ways of soliciting copy, but they all involved some form of coercion. I'm still new enough at this that I believe coercion isn't necessary. Everyone of us has had something happen to us that the rest of us would benefit from knowing. C'mon, share with the rest of the class. The strength of this association is the willingness of its members to help each other. Put something down on paper or call Fred with some news for the "the Bull Sheet." If Fred receives it by the first of the month, it'll get in the next month's issue.

Thoughts from the Pasture:

I am not a turf manager; I am a golf course superintendent. My professional efforts are not designed to grow grass; in fact, a lot of what I do conflicts directly with best management practices of turfgrass culture.

My job is to provide golfers with a place to play their game, and a well-maintained putting surface is a far cry from the ideal turfgrass environment. I have heard it said that we golf course superintendents are the only agronomists that grow their crop to its detriment:

We aren't looking for high yields, and our harvest isn't measured in bushels.

We subject our fragile crop to stresses that keep us awake at night all for the good of the game:

- We mow our crop daily at heights measured in hundredths of an inch.
- We often mow when it's wet because it's the only time we can do our job.
- We roll surfaces that are already compacted from foot traffic that is funneled to one 4.25-inch spot.

• These surfaces are regularly subjected to footwear studded with spikes that are longer than the height of the turf (thankfully, this practice is rapidly losing favor among gentlemen and ladies).

• We don't irrigate the crop when it needs it; we often have to wait until it is on the verge of wilt.

We do these things not because it's good for the turf; we do them for the good of the game. ■



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