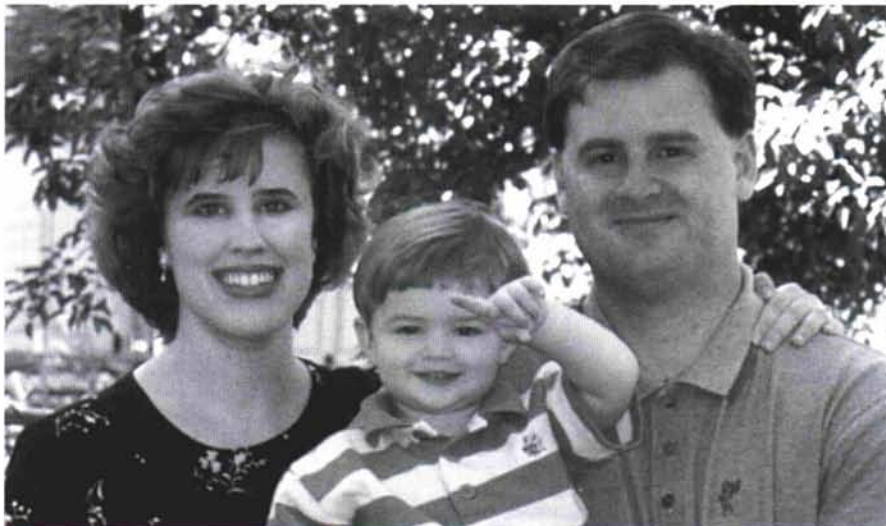


A New Editor "Tees Off"



Cathy, Ryan and Phil Ralston

Cathy Ralston, Editor

Four years ago, Fred Opperman commissioned me to write an article for the August issue of the *Bull Sheet*. My story featured North Shore C.C.'s Dan Dinelli and documented that July's suffocating heat wave. Little did I imagine while completing my assignment that one day, I would assume Fred's role as editor of the *Bull Sheet*'s successor, *On Course*.

Am I honored to find myself charged with editorial leadership of the MAGCS magazine? Certainly! Am I shocked? No. Golf, you see, has been a recurring theme in my life. In fact, my family's immersion in the golf business afforded me some of my most delightful childhood memories. First and foremost, I recall summer evenings riding with my brothers in the grimy flatbed of a Cushman cart as my dad set the sprinklers at Sugar Creek G.C. The sensation of the wind whipping through my hair, the dazzling purples and pinks of the twilight sky, my dad's occasional observations on wildlife, the smell of damp grass—these were

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moments I treasure to this day. (Now that I'm a mother, I realize that my mom, enjoying an hour of solitude back at the homestead, probably cherished those moments, too!)

Also among my favorite memories: our yearly pilgrimages to the Western Open during

Uncle Oscar's tenure at Butler National, at which time we met Tour legends, received incessant lectures on golf etiquette from my dad and ate vast quantities of Italian ice. In 1980, at the grand opening of Arlington Lakes G.C., Uncle Butch hosted our family for the day, which meant lunch and photo ops with the celebrity guest, Bears running back Walter Payton.

Thanks to kind comments from Bob Maibusch and Fred Behnke that appeared in this magazine's April issue, you already know my credentials—a B.S. in journalism from Northwestern University, graduate coursework at the University of Minnesota, nine years of experience in publications and media relations in industries ranging from healthcare to high-tech to golf. I believe, though, that what really matters as I take the helm of *On Course* is my passion for golf and what it offers its devotees, the communities it touches and the individuals who have made it their livelihood. I hope that by waxing nostalgic, you get a sense of the respect I have for the golf course superintendent profession as well as the background I bring to this new endeavor—and perhaps you'll reflect on the memories your own children will one day have thanks to your involvement in the golf industry.

I would be remiss if I didn't divulge a bit more about who I am, even as I look forward to getting to know many of you in the years ahead. In August, my husband Phil and I will celebrate eight years of marriage. Phil is an English teacher and coaches basketball and, of course, golf at Grant Community High School in Fox Lake. Our son, Ryan Timothy, is 21 months old

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Do You Care About the Future?

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recycling in the school, naturalizing school grounds, building a butterfly garden, taking nature walks around the school, constructing nature trails and mounting bird feeders. You can donate leadership for the projects and materials from your golf course if you so desire. A field trip to the golf course ties it all together.

The time to introduce this program is now, when it is early enough for schools to integrate the program into their curricula for the 1999-2000 school year. Your involvement in this program will substantially promote you and our profession. It can help you satisfy the requirement for outreach and education certification of your golf course. Consider too that many of the activities take place in the fall and winter, which is our slower season. What a good reason to get out of the shop!

I think the most important consideration is that your involvement and effort are investments in the future. Not only the future of the great game of golf, but also the future of our ability to continue to enhance and protect the valuable natural resources of the planet—indeed, the very things that compelled us to be involved in golf course maintenance. If you need help getting started, just call me at 815-467-1665. Information is also available through the GCSAA Web site (www.gcsaa.org). 

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and an engaging, exuberant, adventuresome little guy who will undoubtedly get his first golf lessons from Grandpa next summer!

In closing, I have a couple announcements to make. One is the initiation of a Letters to the Editor column, so please—send me your comments and observations, whether related to articles appearing in *On Course* or hot industry issues. Remember, this is your magazine, and it is one of my goals as editor that the magazine include as many of your voices as possible. To that end, on to announcement number two. Fred Opperman took tremendous pride in the quality, and quantity, of superintendent-written articles appearing in *On Course*. Another of my goals is to uphold and build upon that fine tradition. So write that article you've been contemplating, and send it in.

I would also encourage you to give me a call at 847-537-7883 for a brief chat. Call it an informal survey, but I would love to hear your thoughts for the future of *On Course* and any suggestions you might have. Since I myself am not a superintendent, such conversations will be especially valuable to me in terms of shedding light on the challenges you face and the information you require.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to serve as editor of your magazine. I look forward to your feedback and support.

Sincerely,

Cathy Miles Ralston



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