



# A Season of Thanks

*Deadlines require that I scribe this greeting in late October. Using history as an indicator, I suppose I'm safe putting this together prior to the annual meeting and election. I can't think of a vote recently, that has gone the other way on an unopposed slate. Serving as your president is indeed an honor and a responsibility I will meet with all my energies. It has been a great opportunity to serve on the Board over the years, and I am confident that the current Board will do a great job leading the Association in the year ahead. Please know that I am always available for your comments and questions.*

*To all the superintendents and those aspiring to be, a big thank you for the day-in, day-out, professional effort you give. Some are honored more than others are; but every superintendent has the daily opportunity to provide a truly enjoyable experience to a golfer.*

As we embark on our 75th anniversary year, I believe the level of service and support the Association provides is at an all-time high. Based on our most recent survey, the membership strongly agrees. Not negating the challenges and changes ahead, I think we should reflect, celebrate and thank the many responsible for bringing the Association (and our industry) to where it is today. Highlighting some and unintentionally omitting others, a big thank you to the MAGCS members who show up and participate at monthly meetings, pay dues, host meetings, volunteer for committee service, log in on the Web site message board and write articles for publication in *On Course*. To all the superintendents and those aspiring to be, a big thank you for the day-in, day-out, professional effort you give. Some are honored more than others are; but every superintendent has the daily opportunity to provide a truly enjoyable experience to a golfer. The level of respect for our work has never been so high and is well-deserved.

Thanks go out to the Past Presidents' Council (PPC) for linking past leadership with the present and providing vision for our future. We are currently at the point where we need to format another long-range plan and look for the PPC's input. Enough can not be said for our commercial members, too. They continually step to the plate: sponsoring monthly meetings and the hospitality room, securing ad space in *On Course* and providing a high level of service to our industry. Speaking of *On Course*, Cathy has filled the large shoes Fred left behind and raised the bar several notches. She is a true professional, all the while being a mom, WOW! For several years, George Minnis has kept us moving forward like a well-oiled machine. He chugs along behind the scenes and deserves our highest praise. Don't know who he is? Just for starters, with the exception of this publication, he sends every piece of mail your way and handles our membership directory.

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Our business is high-tech and an evolving science. Thanks go out to Dr. Randy Kane, Paul Vermuelen, the staff in Champaign and all the industry turf doctors who guide us. Where we would be without their counsel and their research? Our relations have never been better with affiliated organizations such as the CDGA. Their new Midwest Golf House is scheduled to open in the spring; what an opportunity for our Association to be a part of it. Our partnership with the ITF has never been as good. When you are picking up your badge at the NCTE, remember to thank someone for bringing the trade show and all the education to our doorstep.

I would be remiss not to mention the GCSAA. Talk about a growing group! The number of services they provide is mind-boggling and in my opinion, at a serious discount. They have provided valuable leadership to our chapter and we're fortunate to have a voice on their board from our own backyard. I don't know if many could have forecasted the programs, issues and agendas GCSAA has taken on in the past several years.

I've got my own list of people to personally thank. To all of the Board members I have served with—the Board meetings are something I look forward to. An admitted break away from the daily routine at times, it has been an edu-

cation to see things through others' eyes and hear insights beyond what I could perceive myself. Knowing my day was coming (maybe I was just finally starting to pay attention), has helped me recognize the effort required to fill this new responsibility. Thanks, in particular, to Bob and Don for being such excellent examples to me. I appreciate that and look forward to Don's continued input in the year ahead. Thanks also to Greg Thalmann, who is stepping down after several years on the board. The soon-to-be-realized MAGCS scholarship was a product of his efforts.

A big thank you to my assistants, Bryan Widmer and Damon Soderberg, and the entire staff at Bryn Mawr for keeping my head above water. Our membership praises their efforts and supports me in serving our Association. Thank you to the many mentors I have had: Dennis Buck, Pete Wilson, Scott Azinger, Mike Sauls, Tom Brodeur, John Ebel and Danny Quast. They all trusted me with responsibilities way before I believed I was ready. They were never too busy to answer questions, provide insight or recognize my efforts. To my best friend in the business, Kerry Blatteau, for helping me secure my first job after school, urging me to run for the Board several years ago and for routinely humbling me on the golf course.

I grew up in the small town of Dwight, Illinois, and after an unpredictable weekend at the state golf tournament, the village welcomed home a young group of champions as if they had just won the war. The members at the local country club (DCC) treated the junior golfer as an equal. They let me experience the great game of golf and nearly a dozen "Dwightites" from my generation are now in the business. A humbling golf season as a freshman in college confirmed that making a living with a soil probe, rather than a sand wedge, would probably be best for me.

Thank you to my parents for supporting me my whole life. They motored me from Quincy to Chicago as a junior player, well before I was even remotely average. I was excused from farming duties, and left to spend my days working and playing at DCC. To my wife Pam and daughter Bailey, who keep life in perspective and quite frankly, make things like *Poa annua* and green committees seem pretty insignificant. Everyday, I look forward to walking in the door at home. The good Lord has blessed me and I hope I can fulfill this new responsibility in a way that pleases Him. Happy holidays to you and your families! May the Spirit of the season be with you, not just now, but throughout the entire year.



Leave a Legacy: Consider a Conservation Easement for Your Golf Course (continued from page 10)

which made it a desirable candidate for an easement. Today, roughly 180 acres of the course are protected by an easement.

"After we bought the property, CorLands called us and introduced us to the savings and tax benefits," said Brett Baarstad, owner and general manager of the course. "It goes right to the bottom line. The

benefits and tax savings are really substantial. You think that in order to get savings like that, you have to do quite a bit of work, but it was really very simple.

"Our thinking is that we're in the golf business to stay and we want this to stay a golf course. It's a beautiful piece of property with quite a bit of floodplain that is worked into the design . . .

Protecting the area was a big concern of the forest preserve district.

"We still get all the wildlife out there as when we started out . . . It's a win-win for everybody."

*Questions about conservation easements? Call Nancy Kaszak at CorLands: 312-427-4256, ext. 238.*

