

MAGCS – A Vision for the Future

Editor's Note: This year, On Course has devoted a lot of ink to looking back at the history of our Association. Now, as we begin the march to our Association's centennial, is a good time to start looking forward. This article is based upon Mike Bavier's presentation of the same name delivered at the 49th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah C.C. on November 7. A past president of the MAGCS (1975) and GCSAA (1981), Mike won GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award in 2000. He has been superintendent at Inverness C.C. for 32 years.

The Midwest Association has grown by leaps and bounds over the last 40 years. The membership has steadily increased and its leaders have been determined to create a strong and friendly association. The previous era of our Association is one that I will focus on. It should give you a feel of where we began, where we are now – and then, hopefully, explain where we might want to go. This is what I foresee happening in our Association over the next 50 years, to insure that the future of the Midwest Association remains as promising and powerful as its dedicated members.



Mike Bavier, former president of MAGCS and GCSAA, during the plaid jacket era.

Let's step back a bit – in order to see where we are going, we first need to know from where we started, many years ago.

My first memories of MAGCS go back to the '60s. We had at that time a secretary/treasurer, whose name was Roy Nelson. He recorded all the minutes, did the billing of dues, collected money and made deposits. He wrote all the Association checks and sent out all correspondence, including monthly notices of meetings. Oscar Miles followed Roy in this position. I then followed Oscar. This position required many hours of dedication. However, we only had about 200 members at that time, but all the work was done manually; billing was done on an addressograph machine. Dues were recorded in a book, certificates were stamped with a hand seal and signed by the secretary/treasurer and president. These were sent out with a sticker that could be placed on your car or truck, along with a wallet card. And back in those days, the minutes were read out loud at every meeting by the secretary/treasurer – no dispensing with the minutes in those days!

The Board met only a few times per year, and some of the meeting dates would correspond with the monthly meeting. Meetings were almost always held in conjunction with golf outings. Board members were just as hard to recruit then, as they are now. The secretary/treasurer office could be held for a number of years. And many times, it was

this position that held the Association together. Sometime in the early '70s, we hired a secretary to take the minutes and send out meeting notices.

After that, we really seemed to have arrived in the big leagues—the Midwest, once again, was recognized as one of the power chapters.

During those days, the businessman's lunch was very popular. It included lots of heavy drinking. The meetings tended to get a bit out of hand, and many of the superintendents refrained from holding them at their clubs because the meetings started to be disorderly and even rowdy. At one meeting at Beverly Country Club in the early '70s, chaos abounded. The president was trying to conduct a business meeting, and at least two or three side discussions were going on at the same time. The ones that were full of fire-water wouldn't give the president the proper chance to conduct the meeting. Many of us were dismayed at what was happening. One of my guests at that meeting said that a good parliamentarian and strong pres-

ident would be needed to handle a meeting such as this. After discussion with some of the Board members, we agreed that things had to change. The next year, Paul Voykin was brought forth as president, and with much planning the meetings were set up with an agenda (which is still used today). The meetings now followed "Robert's Rules of Order," and a parliamentarian and sergeant-at-arms were installed. The crowd from the bar that always had the best ideas after a fistful of drinks, were told either to stay in the bar or attend the meetings with the understanding that they were only permitted to speak when allowed to rise and recognized by the president. If anyone was out of order, he would then be removed from the room by the sergeant-at-arms. This procedure applied to everyone in the room.

Ladies and gentlemen, big changes were occurring again. We were back on track.

Since this period of time, we have continued to grow and, like any other organization, we have had our ups and downs. Each



Albie Staudt still looks like this 1974 photo.

president along the way has had his own way of running the organization and his own vision, and rightfully so—that is why he was elected. In any event, for the next five, 10 or 20 years in the future, we will probably see even more changes, and at a faster pace, than we have seen in the last 20 years. Here, then, is one vision for the future.

Vision for the Future

- We need to recruit more Board members and make it so that those who are elected to serve also have time to perform their duties at their own clubs. This might be best accomplished by

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Flashback to 1962: back row (L to R) Ted Woehrle, Paul Voykin, Don Stewart, Bert Rost, Bill Brady; front row (L to R) Roy Nelson, Don Gerber, John Ebel, Warren Bidwell.

hiring more staff to perform the duties of running the Association. Selling the membership on this progressive and far-reaching idea will take some effort. The Midwest Association would become more in line with the national association. This past year, we wisely teamed up with the Chicago District Golf Association and secured office space in their Golf House. This was something our Association needed, a place to call home. Here, our staff will be able to perform the numerous time-consuming duties our Board requires on home turf.

in the future, is the ecologically sound preservation of nature on our golf courses. This, more than likely, will be accomplished



Can you identify this cute couple?

- In the new millennium, the educational arm of our organization should continue to be one of the most important parts of our Association. We need to keep growing and expanding our vision. One important topic now, that will be for many years

through Audubon International and other organizations, including the GCSAA, which offers courses and seminars on these topics. Such education can also be accomplished on the regional level via workshops taught by

those already versed in this field – think Pete Leuzinger, Tim Kelly. We also need to have continued training in CPR. The Association could offer a certification program to its superintendents and their assistants on an annual basis. Perhaps the best time for this would be at a spring meeting. Also, we need more progressive ideas for our educational programs. The best way to achieve this is to have our accomplished senior superintendents participate on the Education Committee. I realize that most of these supers have “been there and done that,” but nothing replaces experience. These superintendents need not chair the committee, but volunteer as members to provide others with their acquired knowledge, expertise and counsel.

- Every year brings to the fore-

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front the need for more and improved publicity. A vision for our future might include recruiting some of our most accomplished and experienced individuals who have worked with the press numerous times in the past – Paul Voykin, Oscar Miles being some of the elder statesmen, Brian Bossert and Don Ferreri in the next wave. Here, once again, the seasoned superintendents need to consult and guide the Public Relations Committee. This is being done now, to some extent, but further efforts need to be made to ensure this process continues.

- We need to continue to improve our image. Perhaps we could accomplish this by dressing up a few days a week, a step or two above our crews. Many superintendents are already doing this and enjoying more respect at their clubs. Perhaps the Association could bring back the

clothing merchandise program that enabled superintendents to purchase high-quality golf apparel at discounted prices. Previously, this attire had the



Past president Tim Kelly in 1992.

Association logo on it. This was not only a good deal for purchase, but also spread the word about our Association.

- The Midwest Association should continue to promote candidates

for the GCSAA board, thus having representation at the national level. Thanks to Bob Maibusch for serving now. This representation allows us a direct line for input into the affairs of the GCSAA. This involvement also enables us to better understand the direction of the GCSAA board and encourages us to be more diligent in running our own Board.

The next five, 10, 25, even 50 years (some of us won't be around at that time) will see many changes. Change is good – but there will be periods, as we experienced in the past, where not everything will run smoothly or progress as we desire. Sometimes it is necessary to take one step back to go two steps forward. Many of us have done this ourselves. All of us who are members of the Midwest need to put our best effort into helping the Mid-

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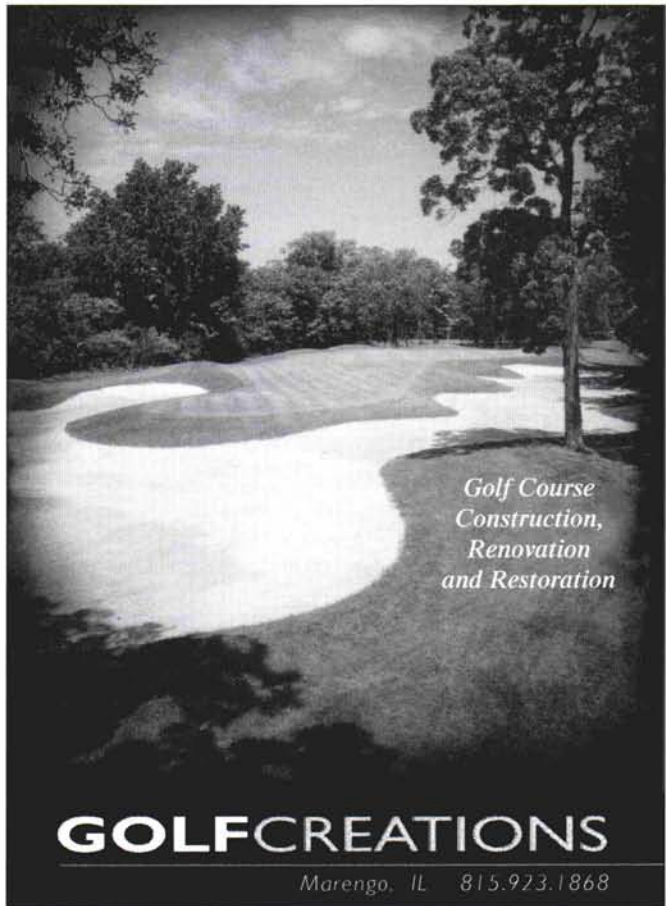
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west grow and be even better than it is today. We need a positive attitude to accomplish those visions that will help us build a bigger, stronger and better Association. I hope that there are a number of you out there – old, young, male, female, new, experienced, or any combination thereof – who are willing to put forth your efforts to forge a stronger Association for the 21st century.

God bless our Association, and God bless America. 



Past presidents (L to R) Don Cross, Bob Maibusch and Al Fierst in 1997.



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