



Put Your Name on the Map: Host a Monthly Golf Meeting

Have you contributed in the last 10 years?

Participating on the Past Presidents Council, our group has the opportunity to review the operations of the MAGCS and observe the trends within our industry. One of our concerns over the last couple of years has been the struggle to get superintendents to host monthly golf meetings. I do not believe that blame for the lack of recruiting success falls entirely on the directors of our Association. In conversations, they claim that securing hosts for golf meetings is like pulling teeth.

Why the reluctance to host a golf event? One common concern is that superintendents don't care to be "under the microscope," so to speak, scrutinized by critics in our own industry.

If one of the main purposes of our Association is to network ideas, strategize and educate for the end result of better golf course management, we are not doing a very good job of instilling confidence in our members to step forward and contribute. Why the reluctance to host a golf event? One common concern is that superintendents don't care to be "under the microscope," so to speak, scrutinized by critics in our own industry. What's the big deal? We are under the watchful eye of our clientele every single day. Everybody has a different management style, and we of all people should understand about the differences in course budgets and should know that every frill has an associated cost. We preach constantly to our bosses about this relationship between costs and conditions. Thanks to the information-sharing that characterizes our industry, the budget constraints of most courses are common knowledge anyway. I remember hosting a meeting at Bartlett Hills Golf Course when the budget was scarce and I felt fortunate to get lunches there for half-price! I did the best I could with what I had to work with and wanted to share the fun experience of playing that golf course with the MAGCS. I hosted a golf meeting and we had a great day.

Don't worry if your course is not as challenging as Butler National. (I wonder what the average handicap of our Association's members is, anyway.) Overall, in the realm of golfing ability, we are not that good. Realize that there is nothing wrong with guests shooting a good score on "your" golf course. I would bet that most of your fondest golf memories are associated with where you had your lowest rounds.

Most of us **do not** own the courses where we work, so why do some superintendents feel like they have to present a difficult golf course in order to gain the respect of their peers? We only work there. When I hosted at River Forest a few years ago, I had the golf course set up relatively easy so everyone would have fun and nobody would leave feeling like he just got mugged in the parking lot. I can't remember too many times that I have felt really good about shooting a high round, even if the course was spectacular. I rarely hear members say how nice the course was after shooting 10 or more over their handicap.

Okay, enough about the critics and the course set-up. Bottom line is, your MAGCS guests are not going to be in on the performance evaluation for

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What Is This Magazine's Mission?

To educate, to entertain, to enlighten, certainly. Beyond this sacred trinity, though, I would argue that On Course also exists to chronicle, to document, to preserve for posterity. Like the New York Times (and I may be skewered for drawing this comparison!), this magazine is a publication of record. Its content reflects the history of the MAGCS in progress.

To better fulfill this aspect of our mission, we're adding a few new recurring columns in 2002. In most issues, look for "Board Highlights," consisting of a few bullet points describing the most recent Board of Directors meeting. The column will touch upon issues discussed and actions taken. The inspiring elder statesman of this Association, Mr. Bob Williams, joins *On Course* as a regular contributor with another addition, "The Voice of Experience."

Unassuming as he is, Bob declined my suggestion to title the column "Williams' Wisdom," pointing out that he intended to draw material from many sources.

In February, look for "The Way We Are"—a sequel to "The Way We Were" series appearing throughout 2001—and a fresh take on the classic personality profile, reminiscent of the Q & As that used to appear in the *Chicago Tribune's Sunday* magazine.

We hope you, our readers, enjoy the content enhancement . . . and as always, we welcome your feedback, comments and insights in our too-seldom-seen "Midwest Voices" column!

A happy and peaceful new year to all,

Cathy Miles Ralston
Editor


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your next raise and they are not going to think less of you if the course where you work is not in the top 100.

Finally, there are some clubs or organizations that will not host outside events, especially "charity" events . . . but are the previously mentioned concerns influencing the prevalence of this excuse? We realize that it is hard these days to persuade "owners" to bypass revenues, but this should not prevent anyone from hosting. Cut the best deal that you can and go from there. We are not asking for complete giveaways. In some cases, we are charged the full price and thankfully, the generosity of our commercial members' sponsorship has kept the costs down. If you need help negotiating, the MAGCS directors are only a phone call away. Be persuasive. After all, you talked them into hiring you.

If you've never hosted a meeting before, be aware that it may be a lot of work and you'll experience some minor "event stress," but it is very rewarding. As far as notoriety goes, it will definitely put your name on the map in our industry. Come on . . . be Mr. Vegas and go for it!





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