



# A Round of Thanks

*Well . . . it's finally here, my final president's message. I have had the duty and pleasure of trying to put intelligent thoughts into words once a month for the last 12 months. This has been one of the most difficult tasks I have ever encountered. I have never thought of myself as a good writer, and maybe I am not, but I would like to thank all of you who have said how much you enjoy my page-and-a-half of spell-checked musings that were usually composed at least 48 hours past the due date. As much as I had trouble coming up with topics, it has also been surprisingly fun to write these columns.*

*I was very lucky to be able to work with a group of people who tried their hardest to provide the membership with the best of everything while attending to their own courses, jobs and families.*

So, Luke . . . what else have you done during your tenure as president of the MAGCS? Let me see . . . I put together agendas for meeting after meeting. I spent countless hours on the phone. I was lucky enough to hear about problems with late meeting notices, meeting registration, the price of meetings and just about every other kind of trouble that you can imagine and some you wouldn't be able to imagine.

On the other side of the coin, I was very lucky to be able to work with a group of people who tried their hardest to provide the membership with the best of everything while attending to their own courses, jobs and families. I was able to witness the MAGCS Board of Directors' hard work pay off as we logged another successful year of running our Association. After eight years on the Board, I have learned that it is extremely difficult to please all of our membership. Kevin Czerkies told me as much long ago, but even forewarned it's been a challenge.

I would be remiss in my presidential duties if I didn't thank and comment on all the individual members of the Board. First, thanks to Kevin DeRoo for his support and willingness to take on anything that wasn't getting done by someone else; to Fred Behnke, who never believed how much work secretary/treasurer was and still was able to keep our money deposited and bills paid; to Tim Anderson, who now has compiled more statistics about the membership than we have ever had; to Dave Braasch, who usually had the longest distance to travel to Board meetings yet kept the Editorial Committee running smoothly; to Luke Cella, who got the opportunity to learn a little about every committee and never complained about having too much to do; to Gary Hearn, for his efforts to keep our education offerings strong and interesting; to Mike Mumper, who was able to secure some of the nicest meeting sites in recent memory and will be missed on the Board; to Phil Zeinert, who I know has had enough of the Golf Committee for awhile but did a great job; to Paul Yerkes, for putting together our hospitality room last February; and to Dave Armentrout, for accepting the appointment of commercial representative and the hard work that entails.

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utes away to borrow some product that would assist the oil-soaked grass in its recovery.

I returned 30 minutes later and was greeted by the rough-mower operator, Jim.

"I got the tractor up against a tree," Jim said.

"Let's go take a look," I said. On the way out to the area, I was thinking to myself, "How bad can this be?" When I got there, the tractor was up against two trees, it had two blown tires and the mowing deck was jackknifed. To top it off, this grisly scene played out on the side of the steepest hill on the course. After surveying the damage, Jim and I headed back to the shop to get the proper tools and equipment to free the pretzel. It took about an hour to free everything and get the tractor to a safe place where we could repair the tires. I determined that it was a good time for lunch. So what if it was only 10:30 in the morning.

After lunch my assistant, Scott, and I went back to repair the fairway unit that was still sitting on the cart path in a puddle of oil. With the blown hose replaced, I was sure the rest of the day would go smoothly. Boy, was I mistaken.

"Dale, do you copy?" came a voice over my radio.

"Go ahead," I answered, a little gun-shy now.

"Well we got a situation here . . . the rough tractor is in the lake . . . it's stuck."

I called back and laughed, "Yeah, right," thinking someone was playing some kind of sick joke on me, the kind of thing the guys like to do when I'm stressed. I put the radio down and resumed work on the mower. A few minutes later, a desperate "Are you coming?" came over the radio followed by a request for the four-wheel drive and some chains. At that moment, I knew it wasn't a joke.

I went back to the shop to get a chain, which is when I got a telephone call from Andy Putzer, my other assistant. He wanted to report that a bee had stung an employee, and now the poor guy was having an allergic reaction. I instructed Andy to get him directly to the clinic.

Soon, I arrived at Mystic Lake to find the tractor stuck in the mud on the lake's edge. My other rough operator, Dick, assisted as I hooked the chains around the axle and pulled her clear. The rescue went smoothly . . . ah, something was finally going my way.

I returned to the shop as the crew began to return, one by one, parking the equipment for the evening. After everyone had punched out, Andy pulled into the lot with the young bee-sting victim. This had been one of the longest days of my life and I was glad to see it come to an end. I looked at Scott and Andy and suggested that we head straight to Monk's, the local watering hole. That good old barley and hops does wonders.

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So when you're having a bad day, think of me and remember . . . while I try to forget . . . that foggy morning in mid-July now known as "Black Monday."



On Course . . . (continued from page 3)

Okay, that covers the 2001-2002 Board of Directors. Now it's time to thank the people who staff the Association. Thanks to Cathy Miles Ralston for being so patient waiting for my president's messages, then doctoring them up when they were late. Thanks to George Minnis, who does it all and is really the most important asset our Association has.

Wait—I am not done yet!! Thanks to outgoing president emeritus

Brian Bossert for the guidance, support and help he gave me this year. Finally, thank you to the membership for the confidence you showed in electing me your president.

In closing, I have enjoyed my tenure as president. It truly has been a learning experience and a great responsibility. I hope my ramblings during the year gone by have answered some of those questions you may have had and maybe got all

of you thinking a little more. I look forward to enjoying the end of the month once again, rather than racing to meet an *On Course* deadline.

Again, my deepest thanks—and my best wishes to the 2003 Board as they carry on in all the pursuits that make the Midwest an outstanding organization and one of the GCSAA's exemplary chapters.

