



Great Expectations

C'mon mom, just leave me alone! I don't want to go to school today! Five more minutes, please. Oh, alright, I'm getting up—jeez!

I'm told that these things are said in my home far too often. But it's hearsay as far as I'm concerned, you see, because when all of this is going on I'm not there. It's 5:00 a.m. and I'm at work. I'm a golf course superintendent.

It's payback time.

Hopefully, by the time March rolls around, my daughter, Marilu (age 14—ouch), will begin to call me dad instead of “that man.” I'll be able to catch my son, Dan (age 19), red-handed as he goes into my dresser to steal my clean socks. And my wife, Nancy (age 29+), will be able to actually converse with me instead of leaving notes and voicemails.

It is late autumn and the course is put to bed. The shop is actually getting cleaner, and the mountain of paper on my desk is shrinking. Work is being planned and we are able to do more pro-acting instead of re-acting. We're down to a 40-hour week, and burning some vacation time. But there's always something new and different in this wonderful business; we're building a new clubhouse, de-silting our irrigation pond, shopping a washwater recycling system and, oh yeah, I'm president of the MAGCS.

I was elected to the Board of Directors in 1996, and in the last eight years I have had the great, good fortune to work with some of the finest gentlemen and ladies I have ever come to know. My experience on the Board has been wonderful. The enthusiasm and shared respect for the art and science of this profession is invigorating, and I've gained far more than I've given. The services that this Association provides have proven to be invaluable to me in my professional development.

For more than 75 years, our membership has benefited from leadership that has had the vision to foresee and meet constantly changing expectations. Over the past several years, it became evident that if the Association were to continue to move forward, we would need help. And then last year things began to happen. The Midwest Golf House became a reality. A place for us to base our operations was there for the asking. Our wonderful executive secretary, George Minnis, became ill and his duties had to be increasingly assumed by his equally wonderful wife and partner, Karen. Unselfish Board members sacrificed more of their precious time to insure that the MAGCS machinery kept running. However, it became apparent that the situation was a house of cards. Too much was being done by too many and only a magnificent effort by master organizer, President Kevin DeRoo, kept all the oars in the water. It was time to pull the trigger and after an extensive, grueling search we, along with the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, hired Luke Cella to be our executive director and set up shop in the Midwest Golf House.

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Through this turbulent year, Kevin (big shoes) DeRoo, at great personal sacrifice, attended every MAGCS meeting, every event, every Board meeting, every Executive Committee meeting and every ITF function. EVERY ONE! Great leaders rise to the occasion and Kevin really earned his spot on the Past Presidents plaque. I followed Kevin through the offices of the MAGCS. It was a brilliant strategy on my part because I inherited positions that had no strings left untied. Following him now is like being handed the keys to a finely tuned sports car.

Let's take this baby out for a spin!

As president of the MAGCS, I have great expectations for 2004. Our executive director, Luke Cella, will, after a brief settling-in period, assume the management of the business of the MAGCS. The Board of Directors will offer guidance and help Luke get comfortable with the calendar. I have the utmost confidence in Luke and the current Board of Directors. You,

the members, should hold us to the high standards you have for your own operation. Excellence is expected.

So where do we go from here? As tempting as it is to take a deep breath and spend some time fine-tuning the operation, I believe we need to direct more energy toward what I perceive to be our biggest need: external recognition. Our partners in the business, professionals, club managers, architects, et al, know that the golf course is THE asset at any golf facility. All the other services and amenities follow a well-managed and manicured golf course. Should we expect them to promote our profession? If so, we are doing ourselves a disservice. I'm not saying that this is an "us versus them" situation, but it is important to remember that credit should go where credit is due. After all, who's on the carpet when conditions are iffy?

The focus of this Association has always been to "... unite the greenskeepers (that word again) and

golf course superintendents of the Chicago Metropolitan area into a cooperative group for the collection, preservation, and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge, thus effecting more efficient and economical maintenance of golf courses . . ." That's in our Bylaws and we do a real good job of that. We will continue to do a real good job of that. Where we need to step up is "... thereby improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige and efficiency of the members . . ." That's right from the mission statement too. I have challenged our new Board of Directors to address this need and you'll be hearing more about this as these outstanding intellects gnaw on this bone.


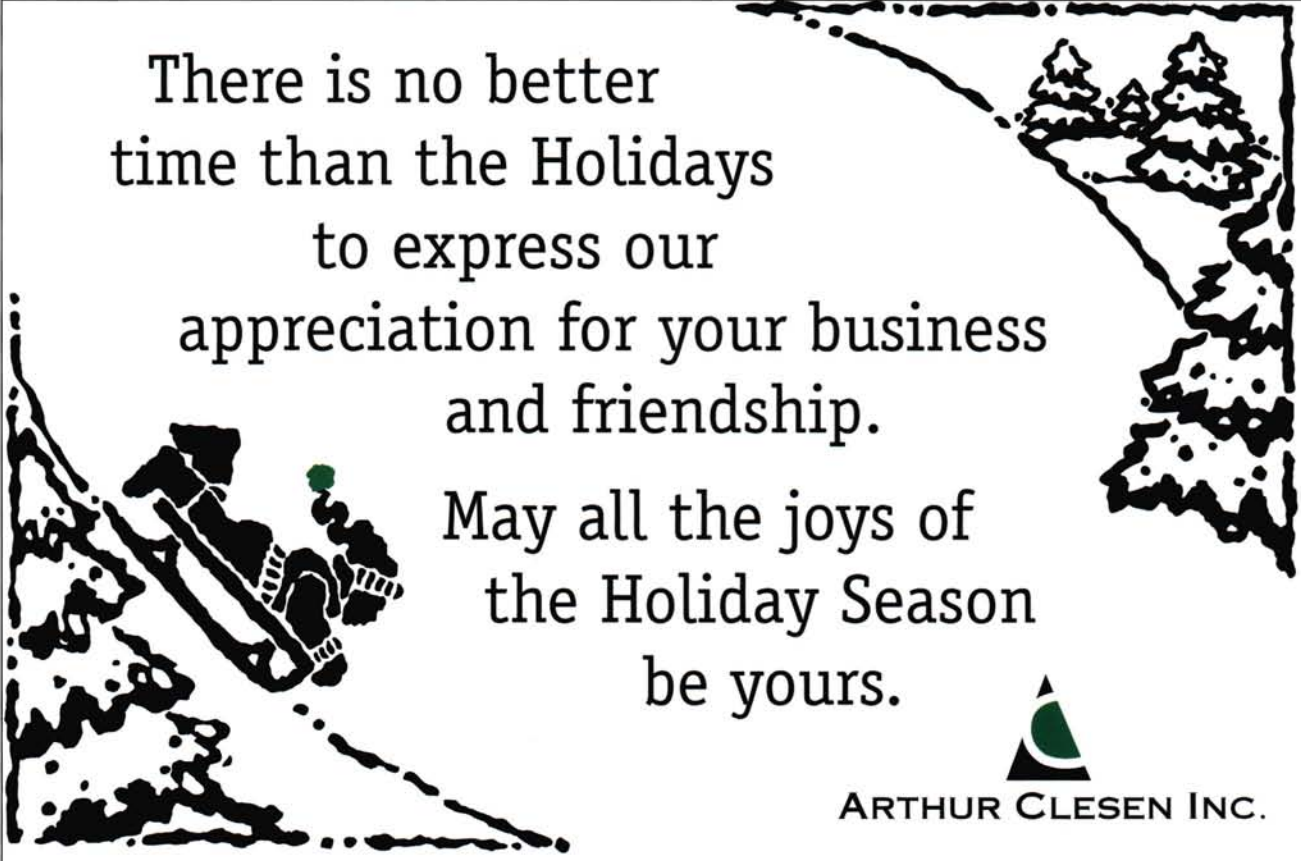
Enjoy your families this holiday season. Buy your significant other something expensive. Put on a couple of pounds and break out the winter wardrobe.

See you next year. It's going to be a wild ride.



There is no better time than the Holidays to express our appreciation for your business and friendship.

May all the joys of the Holiday Season be yours.



ARTHUR CLESEN INC.