



Change on the Horizon?

As a longtime member of the Editorial Committee and now as its chair, I can vouch that we are continuously looking for ways to improve On Course magazine. You have seen the changes in the past, including the conversion from a black-and-white newsletter to a 32+-page full-color publication and the implementation of new editorial awards and feature content. At this time, I would like you to take a quick look through this issue and see how easy or difficult it is to follow an article. Might take some time and effort—yes? Why? Because mixing editorial and advertising content sometimes requires distracting “jumps”—those legendary “continued ons”—and cluttered layouts!

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The Editorial Committee's latest idea is to, in effect, “defragment” the magazine. You do it to your computer on a regular basis to make it easy to find files and so it runs more efficiently—why not do it to the magazine.

Here is one proposal we are mulling over: to partially or completely remove all advertising from *On Course*. Please finish reading this before picking up the phone and going ballistic on someone who really doesn't deserve it. Yes, the By-laws of the MAGCS currently state that *On Course* must meet a 60/40 advertising-to-editorial ratio, but change can be good. We would consider removing all of the advertising and instead, placing one-time ads into our annual membership directory. What might be the benefits of doing so?

- A much “cleaner” and more aesthetically pleasing monthly publication to read and follow.
- One-time billing of our supporting vendors for an entire year of commercial sponsorship, which would save everyone involved both time and paperwork. This would have the added benefit of affording our editorial staff more time to experiment with the magazine and enhance the content to improve it even more.
- More frequent and better visibility for our commercial members' advertisements. Quite honestly, I look through my membership directory more often than I do at *On Course*. The magazine I read once and put on the shelf, whereas the directory I look through several times per week. For many of us, it is a daily reference guide.

We are currently working with our printer, Darwill Press, and our graphic artist, Mark Karczewski, to find out what the new pricing structure would be. The preliminary notion is that this approach could cost the commercial members the same or less, in terms of dollars, for more—more visibility on a daily basis. For those vendors desiring to run seasonal messages, we could—on a quarterly basis—provide the opportunity to place advertising inserts in the mailing envelopes with *On Course*. These seasonal messages could supplement

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The fact was that I had a young toddler at the time and I preferred dead grass to the image of my baby eating Milorganite. With all due respect to the fine folks in Milwaukee . . . well, you get my drift. As Teddy grew out of his bug-, dirt- and worm-eating phase, we got down to work with a comprehensive lawn-management master plan. Like any self-respecting golf course superintendent, my husband implemented a chemical-application plan and then ripped out a quarter of our lawn and laid sod. He gave me a new weedwacker and an additional 100 feet of hose with instructions to water at every opportunity. Then he made a quick escape to the course.

The entire neighborhood watched me haul hose for two months. I used wave sprinklers, rotating sprinklers and variegated hoses. The entire process took over two hours both morning and night. Due to watering restrictions, I was only allowed to water with sprinklers on odd days. On the even days, I often forced the children to look like they were playing in the rotating Elmo sprinkler while I stood and hand-watered hot spots and mangy-looking sod.

Ten-plus years of marriage to a golf course superintendent have taught me to go away, very far away, during the hottest portion of the summer. The children and I flee, every year, to visit family on the east coast for the month of July. We head

back to the old homestead where my sister still allows the clover to rule. This leaves the big guy with sod-watering duty. The first year, shortly after our return from out east, an impressive crew from Rainmakers arrived to install a commercial-grade irrigation system in our lawn. Jonathan Jennings, CGCS had not enjoyed his stint as watering grunt.

The master plan has been fully implemented and I am no longer pitied in the neighborhood. In fact, I am still looking for my award for the most improved lawn. As I stand with my coffee cup in hand and contemplate run times and spray trajectory, the very same neighbor who got the ball rolling in the first place, stops to ask me what to do about some thin spots on her lawn!

I have a serious relationship going with the irrigation controller in my garage and my Honda Harmony and I have pattern mowing (even double-cutting) down to a science. The children have to wander to other yards to pick those special yellow flowers. The bunny issue is unresolved, but a felon relocation program is under serious consideration.

Now, as my oldest child approaches 11, I look forward to handing over my old title of DM. I will happily be promoted to Suburban Lawn Superintendent.



the annual sponsorship ads in the membership directory. Also, each monthly issue of *On Course* would likely include a full-page, alphabetical directory of “sponsors” or “patrons” comprising our supporting vendors and contact names/phone numbers.

I can't go into any more detail at this point as we are in the early stages of investigating this proposal's feasibility. I will at this time ask all members to look for an *On Course* readership survey that will be mailed in conjunction with the July meeting notice. From our commercial members, in particular, we would like feedback on the topic of advertising in *On Course* versus the membership directory, so please take the time to complete the survey as soon as possible and send it back to us. Please do not ignore this call for your thoughts, as a silent voice is never heard. More information will be relayed to you as it becomes available. Thank you for your valuable assistance!



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