



Success on Tap

I was taking a spin through the MAGCS Directory the other day and I was a bit dismayed at the number of names I didn't know. Despite a somewhat lengthy tenure on the MAGCS Board of Directors and attending at least half of the monthly meetings for the last 15 years, I haven't had the opportunity to meet a seemingly large segment of the membership. It occurred to me that if I didn't know someone, they in turn probably didn't know me (pretty sharp thinking, huh). Anyway, I'm the MAGCS president this year and I got to thinking about the best way to introduce myself to those of you who don't know me.

I haven't had an original thought in my life.

I learned early on that if I were going to amount to anything I would need help, so my best work is "borrowed" from others. I have one talent—the ability to dial a telephone and ask for help. For me, the MAGCS Directory is the yellow pages for success (or at least, longevity). I've been able to endure in this profession because of a circle of fellow golf course superintendents who are willing to share their expertise with me. Because of them, I've been able to work smarter, not harder. So, to know me is to know them, and here they are . . . Oh, by the way, in the interest of protecting the innocent, instead of naming names I've decided to refer to my confidantes by the one thing we have in common—a genuine respect for beer.

Heineken is a guy who takes care of a beautiful private club located on the North Shore. He is probably the most analytical of my phone tree. When I have a thorny issue to solve, he's the best bet for examining the issue and identifying remedial measures. His science is solid and he's very organized. I have to temper his input with the fact that I don't have his seemingly limitless resources, but he's a good place to start.

Busch is the best grass-grower I know. As Bob Dylan says, "His clothes are dirty but his hands are clean . . ."; well, his hands are dirty too, but nobody has a greater sensitivity for the importance of timing and he plays the weather like a magician. I will go out of my way to go past his course in the morning just to see what he's up to and as often as not, we end up doing the same thing that day.

Budweiser is the nuts-and-bolts guy. He has a small public course on a limited budget and he's the superintendent/spray tech/ irrigation tech/ mechanic. He keeps the shop immaculate and refers to all his equipment by model number (i.e., 223D or BL2000). I always have to interrupt him to ask what the machine does or I get lost. He claims he gets three years out of a bed-knife and I tell him he's full of it, but if anyone could, it's him. He's the guy to go to for the scoop on new iron.

(continued on page 4)

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Corona with lime is the communicator. His gig is upscale public at a c-note for 18 holes. His course runs golf carts with GPS, leather seats and a mini-bar. He drives an SUV that he replaces every three years on the golf course's dime. He has the gift of being able to explain away dead turf in straight lines as an "act of God." I've needed him more than I care to admit.

Zima is the medicine man. He's young, handsome, has a wife earning six figures, and is therefore not easy to like, but he knows the new chemicals, PGRs and bio-thingies better than the guys selling them. He took a liking to my plant-protectant bid package so I let him use it providing he adds the new stuff and gives me the skinny on what's hot and what's snake oil. Heck, all I have to do is pull it up on my computer and e-mail it to him every winter. The down side is listening to him complain about the difficulties of living on 175K with no kids. It's a considerable down side.

Last and certainly not least, Lite is my compadre, a fellow muni operator. We both drive in excess of 50,000 rounds a year through our tracks. When I want to cry about cart traffic, ball marks and divots, he gets a call. He knows the park district business; bids, IEPA, IDOT, POs, RFPs, NOIs, BS, etc. We help each other through the paperwork and often submit each other's work as our own. I get more from him than he gets from me because I also have Corona with lime in my corner.

You'll be reading about all of us throughout the year. I hope you'll find us informative, or at least amusing. I hope to add a few more brands to the bar as the year progresses.

I guess that if there is a "President's Message" somewhere in here, it's that MAGCS is all about people. The strength of any association is in a shared purpose and the willingness of its members to contribute to its suc-

cess. We are all pulled in many directions: family, faith, work and community. Sometimes it seems like our lives are like the guy on the old "Ed Sullivan Show" who would spin plates on sticks, running around the stage catching and spinning the plates just before they would fall.

I'll bet you could add one more plate to your act.

Join a committee, host a meeting, write an article for *On Course*. Give me a call—I'll be happy to help you get started. I guarantee you'll get more than you give.

Have a happy, safe and prosperous new year!

By the way, I'm MGD.



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