

# 53rd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic Hits New Heights



Big crowd in a big room with big guys holding up a big balcony with their big heads.

*From the get-go, it was apparent that this was not to be “your father’s turf clinic.” The full house of more than 200 attendees learned that at the sound of the morning’s first bell, when President (for the remainder of the day, anyhow) **Phil Zeinert** made his annual meeting presentation via a PowerPoint “year in retrospect” format. **Tony Kalina**’s Education Committee had a really excellent program in store for all, featuring a mixture of interesting “imported” speakers, local superintendents, colorful moderators and a bring-down-the-house keynote speaker.*

The day’s sponsors—Anton’s Greenhouse, Arthur Clesen, Inc., J. W. Turf, Nadler Golf Car Sales, Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Palatine Oil Company and Turf Professionals Equipment Company—got their money’s worth for their generosity, what with the outstanding program and attendance. The day’s overarching theme was “Change Change Change,” and the morning lineup certainly addressed that motif from a wide array of angles. Morning moderator **Paul Voykin** kept things moving at record pace while introducing speakers and interspersing his humorous anecdotes. The first speaker of the day was Mark Esoda, CGCS of Atlanta Country Club, with his presentation “Managing Change for Personal and Facility Growth.” Good thing Mark brought along a large supply of business cards, as every MAGCS member who shook his hand afterward now has a game lined up at his club during the Golf Industry Show (which is, I’m told, still scheduled to be held in Atlanta). Next up was Doug Sisterton, M.S., research meteorologist at Argonne National

Laboratory, speaking on “Preparing for Climate and Weather Change.” Though thoroughly interesting, Doug’s talk was also somewhat alarming in its outlook for our weather future here in the Midwest—more of the same, according to his computer models.



*Tony Kalina with Doug Sisterton, Paul Voykin and Mark Esoda.*

After a break in the action, the last morning topic was a roundtable Q-and-A session with three MAGCS superintendents who, in the last year, were “Shifting Service—MAGCS Veterans on the Move Discuss Their 2005 Relocations.” **Tim Anderson, CGCS** (Prestwick C.C. to Naperville C.C.), **Dave Blomquist, CGCS** (Naperville C.C. to Twin Orchard C.C.), and **Joel Purpur, CGCS** (River Forest C.C. to Park Ridge C.C.) all shared the trials and tribulations of their recent career moves as Paul Voykin kept the tough questions coming rapid-fire.



*Tim Anderson, Dave Blomquist and Joel Purpur.*

By the way—future moderators, please turn off your cell phones, pagers, pacemakers and any other electronic devices prone to ringing, beeping or playing show tunes before taking the podium, thank you. The favorite sound of the day followed (“lunch is served”), and the morning session came to an end.

Before getting down to business after lunch, some other business had to be seen to—namely, the presentation of the various awards and scholarship checks, and the annual election. Leading off was the announcement and presentation of the Ray Gerber Editorial Award for the best-judged superintendent-written original article published in *On Course* over the past year. The 2005 winner for his article “Time to Run” was **Jon Jennings, CGCS** (his second consecutive triumph).



*Gerber winner Jon Jennings.*

Next, the Fred Opperman Editorial Award for the best-judged nonsuperintendent-written original article published in *On Course* over the past year was presented to winner **Greg Martin** for his article “The Golf Paradox.” **Don Ferreri** then took the podium to update us on all the latest GCSAA chapter delegate information, followed by Phil Zeinert’s presentation of the President’s Award for Meritorious Service to Kishwaukee College’s Larry Marty.



*Phil with Larry Marty.*

Next up was **Holly Gilmour**, presenting a check for the John Buck Memorial Scholarship fund in the amount of \$5,000, and **Dan Howard** of Master of the Links, presenting a check for \$1,000 for the Paul Burdett Scholarship fund. **Ed Braunsky** and **Don Ferreri** proceeded to run a flawless election where **Gary Hearn** was announced as our new president, **Tim Anderson** as vice president and **Dave Braasch** as secretary/treasurer. Directors elected were **Scott Witte**, **Dan Sterr** and newcomer **Tom Prichard**.

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The afternoon session began with moderator **Oscar Miles, CGCS** introducing a panel of gentlemen who shared their thoughts on “Changing Hats—MAGCS’s Newest Supers Discuss Their First Season as Superintendents in 2005.” **Nick Baker** (Riverside G.C.), **Jeff Pozen** (Downers Grove G.C.) and **Tim White** (Prestwick C.C.) fielded a barrage of queries from Oscar, each doing a fine job on the panel.



*Nick Baker, Tim White and Jeff Pozen.*

Next up was Keith Krasemann, Ph.D, from College of DuPage with his ideas on “Changing Direction—the Ethics and Leadership of Change.”



*Keith Krasemann with Oscar Miles.*

Saving the best for last (no offense intended to those who came prior), Oscar introduced our keynote speaker, Mike Ditka. As it was a 70° day in November, it was apparent that the Coach was eager to get outside and play a little golf (as evidenced by his “Oscar, you’re killing me!” plea to speed up the intro just a bit). The Coach spoke of leadership, character, integrity and all the other ingredients of a winner, sounding very much like he did in his press conferences after a victory. He spoke of his sports heroes—Vince Lombardi and Stan Musial, and the things that made them winners, and of the biggest influence in his life—Michael McCaskey. NOT! Okay, it was Tom Landry, but he did manage to get a job in at the end about his buddy from his Bears days. He was also very generous in fielding questions from the audience about any number of topics, including one from the biggest Vikings fan in the room (Braunsky) that elicited the response, “Row, row, row your boat”—you figure it out.



*The Coach still has the fire in his eyes (thanks in part to lack of red-eye reduction).*

Once our keynote speaker was on his limping way, the gavel was passed from Phil to Gary and the meeting was adjourned—RIGHT ON TIME! Congratulations to everyone involved in this year’s clinic, and thank you to **Tom Lively** and the staff at Medinah Country Club for again graciously hosting this event.



*Phil ceremoniously passes the gavel to our new president, Gary Hearn.*



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