



Parting Shots

If you want to hear God laugh,
tell Him you've made plans.

The past president's position on the MAGCS Board of Directors is a lot like sending your kid off to college. On the one hand, you want to be involved and available to step in and "fix" the inevitable problems and crises that crop up, but on the other it's time to let go and get out of the way so they can fly. At least the Board of Directors doesn't call home for more money.

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Every year I've spent on the Board has been a learning experience and this year was certainly no exception. This should come as no big surprise, but it's all about people. This Association is nothing but a network designed to connect individuals. Sometimes in groups and often between just two, but always individuals—selling, buying, questioning, gossiping, complaining, celebrating—the buzz is invigorating when we get together. But we are more than individuals. Away from work we have families—even the most curmudgeonly golf course superintendent has a mother and a father.

The MAGCS Benevolence Policy is a powerful acknowledgement that we are more than individuals. Through memorial contributions, flowers and sympathy cards, this Association makes an effort to reach out to bereaved members just to say we care. The past president gets this sobering but important assignment and sadly, it was a busy year in the benevolence department. I would venture to guess that every member of this Association personally felt the loss of at least one of our passed members or member's loved ones. This holiday season, pause a moment and reflect on those who went before us, and give everyone you love a hug on behalf of your friends in the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

Thoughts from the pasture:

- We golf course superintendents need to seize and hold the reins of accountability in our area of expertise. It's a big mistake to allow a surrogate to speak for you, and never ever allow someone else to bring you a directive or request from a decision-maker at your facility without personally following up. Something as seemingly innocuous as, "Mr. Golf Pro, tell the Superintendent that we need flower pots for tee-markers on ladies' day" can quickly turn into "Mr. Golf Pro, how's the maintenance budget doing?" Pretty soon you're out of the room when the big decisions are being made. I've seen it happen and yes, it's politics—deal with it.
- As for greens committee members . . . Among the professions that often represent the decision-makers at our respective clubs, I particularly like doctors. As a rule, they understand the fact that while medicine is a science, the patient is an individual. What works for one does not always work for another. Much the same is true on a golf course, and I think doctors are more capable of understanding that idiosyncrasies exist and, in fact, should be embraced.
- Bankers and accountants are the other side of the coin. They like their world in a box with clear-cut parameters and expectations. Throw a member-guest event following a two-inch rain at them, and you're likely to be dodging shrapnel from the explosion. If you have a couple of accountants or bankers on your greens committee, take a business-writing seminar—you'll be doing

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- a lot of memos and reports.
- Oh yeah, funeral directors are great too; these guys have a sense of humor and really know how to party.
- Droughts are better than floods—not by a lot, but remember it could always be worse.
- This is to everybody that I told, “It’s dormant, but it’ll come back when we get a little rain.” I was wrong.

- How ‘bout that algae. I had some so thick that golf balls were perched on my water hazards like ping-pong balls. Golfers were actually walking out to play their water balls. I brought in my aerator and didn’t get my feet wet. Bu-dum-dum—rim shot. I’m done.



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