



MAGCS members (L-R): Tim Anderson of Naperville CC, Tom Prichard of Ivanhoe CC, Dave Ward of Coyote Run and Dan Dinelli of North Shore CC.

Golf Course Builders Association Hosts Annual Meeting and Invites MAGCS Members

This year's summer meeting of the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA) was held in Chicago following its tradition of being held in conjunction with the PGA Championship. Tom Shapland, President of the GCBAA, gave the opening remarks. Tom Shapland is the President of the Midwest Office of Wadsworth Golf Construction Company. He described how the GCBAA is involved with many of the Allied Associations of Golf. Each of the Allied Associations then gave a brief summary of their activities and highlights of the past year. That's all well and fine but I am sure you are asking yourself...

“The Golf Course Builders Association is a nonprofit trade association of the world's foremost golf course builders and suppliers...”

What exactly is the Golf Course Builders Association?

The Golf Course Builders Association is a nonprofit trade association of the world's foremost golf course builders and suppliers, representing all segments of the golf course construction industry. It was founded in 1970 and provides a variety of comprehensive programs and services including industry promotion, education, and advocacy.

The GCBAA is a founding member of the Allied Associations of Golf, and continues to work closely with the American Society of the Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), the USGA, the National Golf Foundation, and the GCSAA, on a variety of issues affecting the golf course construction industry

How can the GCBAA help me, the Golf Course Superintendent?

The more a superintendent can express his/her opinion during the construction process, the better off he/she will be when it comes to maintaining the course after the grow-in. Voicing your opinion may work on its own but when you back it with solid publication facts, your opinion and requirements become more credible.

For example, the GCBAA has been very busy the last couple of years with the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and have put together a one-page chart **Golf Course Items: Expected Life Cycle**.

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As golf course renovations become more common, golf course superintendents are asked questions that range from when a course should be renovated, to what should be done, and when particular golf course components need to be replaced. This chart can help you guide your decision makers into what needs to be done now and in the future. Does your course have a Master Plan? A plan must be in place that allows for budgeting of both time and money so that courses don't just react to emergencies. As Tom Marzolf, past President of ASGCA explains: "An actual list of golf course components—from tee boxes and greens to cart paths and irrigation systems—and their life expectancies will help every golf club avoid unexpected expenses because they'll know how long components should last, and, of course, anticipating when components need to be replaced rather than waiting for them to fail will allow clubs to keep layouts open and operating smoothly."

To request a copy, please write to ASGCA.org or call ASGCA at (262) 786-5960.

Another key publication that the GCBA has been involved with is the Guide to Estimating Cost for Golf Course Construction. In order to promote accurate understanding of golf course construction costs, the GCBA periodically surveys its members to determine average minimum and maximum prices for 25 line items. Spreadsheets containing this data are available on an interactive CD-

ROM.A feature unique to the CD_ROM version is that the data spreadsheets can be used in Excel or Adobe Acrobat Reader formats. The cost guide also includes a description of the Golf Course Builder Certification Program, a bibliography of useful resources on golf course planning, design, and construction, and other information on the GCBA. The cost is \$50.00 for members and \$100.00 for non-members, which also includes a hard copy of the GCBA 2006 membership directory. An order form can be accessed through the GCBA website at www.gcbaa.org, or contact them at 401-476-4444.

As mentioned earlier, the GCBA prides itself on being involved with many of the Allied Associations of Golf. I will relate the other pertinent facts derived from the talks put on by the ASGCA, NGCOA, LPGA, PGA, USGA and the GSCAA in part two of this article to be featured next month.

The GCBA then presented a panel discussion featuring our own MAGCS members: Tim Anderson of Naperville CC, Dan Dinelli of North Shore CC, Tom Prichard of Ivanhoe CC and Dave Ward of Coyote Run. They discussed the role of the superintendent in the golf course construction and renovation process. This discussion, moderated, by our own MAGCS member, Mike Benkusky, proved quite eye opening to both the GCBA membership and our MAGCS members. Each organization realized that they could provide valuable insight and experience to help each other reach their primary goals.

Tim Anderson keyed in on the importance of the superintendent's involvement from the beginning of a renovation or construction. He stated that it is very important to be involved with the specifications of a renovation so that you will have the ability to maintain it once the project is complete. Tim also explained that you must market to the membership the entire process of the renovation and make sure they understand it will not be perfect on opening day. Tim also touched on the fact that many technical aspects of the renovation should be left to the Contractor who is better equipped (and has the experience) to handle the situation. There are so many details that have to be tracked. Please refer to the article on Tim's MS Project computer program in On Course's August publication for more details. Even with all the planning and tracking, Naperville CC was still seeking permits even though the work started months earlier. Tim highlighted the importance of communication to the membership. Tim used a storyboard placed in the clubhouse to explain different phases of the project. He has a three-person communication team that puts out a newsletter every two weeks to update members on the renovation's progress. Lastly, Tim also stressed that a project can take as long as 3 years from start to finish:

- First Year: You need to sell the project to the membership
- Second Year: Start Getting the Permits for the project.
- Third Year: Actually building/renovating the course.

They discussed the role of the superintendent in the golf course construction and renovation process.



Tim Anderson



Dave Ward

Dave Ward discussed the three-way relationship of the superintendent, architect, and the contractor and its impact on quality control. Having

input with the other two partners can make it easier for the superintendent to maintain the course once it opens. Being involved in the selection of grass type can be rewarding and critical. He stressed the importance of seeking out all available outlets of information on turf types: University Professors, Seed companies, Superintendents, etc and find someone you can trust to help ease the process. He also stated that you need to educate the club officials on details such as green speeds and what is realistic on opening day. Dave highlighted that he likes to leave the details and expertise to the contractor and architect citing "I can grow grass but that's about it". Dave also keyed on starting very early on the permit process so that you do not have delays during the construction phase. Apparently, Dave learned the hard way with Cook County!



Tom Prichard

Tom Prichard, who has had experience both in new construction and a renovation, highlighted how a renovation is a little more complicated than a new construction project for two reasons:

You have to constantly communicate to the existing members not only the progress of the construction process but also try to set their expectations of how the course will look like on reopening day. A course will need time to mature and the condi-

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"...renovation is a little more complicated than a new construction project for two reasons..."

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tions will not be the same as they were the day the course closed for the renovation. More importantly, if you are doing a renovation that involves shutting down 9 holes at a time, each section of the renovation will have its own cycle of maturity. Each year a section of the course will reach its intended maturity, appeal and play. The tricky part for the superintendent is to remind the membership of this during each phase of the project.

During a renovation, many times part of the course remains open. You are constantly struggling with daily maintenance procedures with missing key components such as Irrigation. Many times a superintendent has to resort to hand watering tees and greens. Many times a superintendent has to maintain existing tees and “grow in” tees at the same time.



Dan Dinelli

Dan Dinelli keyed in on the importance of communication between the Owner, the Architect, and the Builder. A superintendent should help the builder understand the property by sharing maps locating irrigation and drainage lines and other “surprises” underground. A superintendent can get involved with the location of staging areas so that there is minimal damage to the golf course. You need to identify “hard surfaces” to move the materials in and out, especially during bad weather. Many hours are spent working with the suppliers on the project to ensure timely and coordinated deliveries to fit the construction schedule.

Dan said many times his membership wants the work done in-house. Dan feels that sometimes its best to let a professional builder do

the work; you can save money in the long run because it is done in a timely fashion. Many times the membership expects timely results with the same amount of staff. It just can’t be done that efficiently.

Dan also said that using digital photography could be a good tool in creating a visual expectation of what the course will look like during the various phases of the project. He also stated the importance of having a Master Plan for the property. Dan also stated he would like to see the GCBAA publish more “works in progress” information on their website as well as timelines associated with different phases of projects. Dan also expressed his desire to see more information on the environmental issues. Give some thought and information during the planning/construction phase to ensure that there will be efficiencies afforded for ongoing maintenance. Improve the agronomics through design and construction materials so that dividends can be realized for many years. Since the GCBAA has an active committee member, Bill Kubly, of Landscapes Unlimited as the head chair of the Environmental Institute for Golf, this should be no problem in the near future!

What constitutes a Golf Course Builder Member and how do you find them?

Tom Pritchard said that at Ivanhoe the builder was chosen through a bid process. Tom said he asked fellow superintendents about how various builders did on their respective projects and what was the maintenance like after the fact. He also suggested that architects sometimes have preferred builders and you can rely on their opinions as well. The most important part of the builder is their experience level and expertise. “Some architects have renovations out to bid, and others have a short list of contractors they’re comfortable with. Superintendents don’t really influence the choice of contractor. In this day and age, with player’s expectations, I don’t see the reason why you would cut corners, because if you do, you’ll live with it for many years.”

Tom’s suggestion to the GCBAA: We need more help and information on the financial

A superintendent should help the builder understand the property by sharing maps locating irrigation and drainage lines and other “surprises” underground.

part...how much did a change order actually cost him?

(I am hoping that we can get a speaker from the GCBAA to come to one of our monthly meetings in the near future.)

Dave also keyed in on that the Construction foreman is the key element for a smooth project. Tim stressed once again, it depends on the technical aspects of the project on the type of contractor you choose. For Tim’s case, a major construction company was required due the vastness of his project.

In addition to the Golf Course Superintendents panel, the GCBAA also featured an Architects Panel Discussion that featured three other MAGCS members: Rick Jacobson of Jacobson Golf Course Design, Bob Lohmann of Lohmann Golf Design, and Greg Martin of Martin Design Partnership. Greg Muirhead of Rees Jones, Inc. and current President of the ASGCA also participated. Details of their lively discussion will be featured next month as well.

So, what constitutes a golf course builder and how do you find them? Stay tuned for next month and I explain what the Golf course Builders Association is all about. If you are already starting or contemplating a project and cannot wait, check out the GCBAA’s website at www.gcbaa.org to start gathering information now.

