

ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Dan Sterr, Stonebridge Country Club



Throwing Rocks out of Bunkers

It is both an honor and a privilege to be selected as the President of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. I remember working at Springbrook Golf Course in the late '70s, when I was in high school. I read the "Bull Sheet" that my boss, Bill Walsh, had in his office. I remember thinking "wow" this is really some neat stuff. The important people in our business are the President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer and Directors of an Association; they must be really important. Never in a million years did I think I would be one of those guys. I remember my first day of work at Springbrook in the fall of 1977. I was sent out to rake bunkers and given the five-minute instruction on how to use the Sand Pro. I proceeded to rake the bunkers. On the 6th hole I was doing my thing with the Sand Pro when I came across a large rock. I picked it up and threw it out of the bunker into the rough. There was a guy mowing rough at the time. From a distance, he had seen what I did, and came over to the bunker. He kindly explained to me that it was not a good idea to throw the rock into the rough, that the rock could damage the mower he was pulling behind the tractor. That guy was a Past President of the Midwest Association, Joel Purpur. Thanks, Joel, for taking that job at Naperville Country Club when you did, because that allowed me to have my first job on a golf course. From that time on, I knew that I wanted to be a Golf Course Superintendent.

We all entered this profession for a reason. Some of us because we love the game of golf; some because we like to be outdoors; some because we like to grow things; some because we thought it would be really neat to drive the cool equipment that they used on the course. I'm sure there are hundreds of other reasons, but the one thing that I believe everyone has for this profession is passion. In this profession, we all make sacrifices: weekend work, early mornings, late nights, meetings that sometimes last into the wee hours of the morning, but we do what we do because we have a passion for it. How many of us have had employees that expressed an interest in working on a golf course, but after the first few weekends of early mornings they don't want to work on a golf course anymore? We stayed because we are passionate about what we do, and we care about what we do. We're all very proud of our facilities, and we should be. Every now and then, Mother Nature reminds us who is really in charge. But after a couple of months of down time, and I use that term loosely, we are always ready to tackle a new season. How many of us are really excited in spring, when we mow greens for the first time? I know I am. Sure we all have times when things aren't going well, or when the weather deals

us an event that is not so kind. We think, "Why am I doing this," "why did I enter this profession?" But at the end of the day, the end of a season, we all reflect back and realize why we do what we do. I have been lucky to be involved with the Board of Directors since April of 2005. I can honestly say that everyone I served with has had a true commitment and passion for the Midwest and the profession. I would like to encourage everyone to be active in your association, whether it be serving on a committee, hosting a monthly meeting, or attending a monthly meeting.

Mother Nature certainly delivered us a blow this year. She reminded us of how humbling this profession can be. We have some down time. I encourage everyone to reflect on this past season, spend some time with your families during the holidays, recharge the batteries, and come out ready for the 2011 season. **-OC**