

ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT
Dan Sterr, Stonebridge Country Club



Parting Words from the President

This year has been one for the record books in many different ways. Mother Nature delivered us another tough one and reminded us of who is in control. Weather wise, it seemed like a year of extremes: It started in February with the blizzard followed by a cold damp spring. It reached 90° the first week of June trailed by heavy rains and windstorms. High heat and humidity came next with little relief in sight, some even recorded a record rainfall for a single day, and this was still July. At last, August and September arrived and seemed to be somewhat more normal. I hope this is not the “new normal” of golf everyone is talking about. Most thought there was no way 2011 could be worse than 2010, but after experiencing 2011, it came out on top as wickeder. Some of the windstorms and record rainfall were hit or miss, but all experienced the heat and humidity that created the long days that started earlier in the season and the impacts of a stalled economy. All this, coupled with a tough previous year where some turf recovery may have been hampered by a poor fall in 2010 made 2011, in many people’s memory more difficult. There was more than one seasoned superintendent that told me 2011 was the toughest year they have ever experienced. Looking back at the season of 2011, we all have something to talk about.

Years ago, a person in the golf business told me the golf season is like a three day holiday weekend. They explained that Friday is Memorial Day weekend, Saturday is the 4th of July, and Sunday is Labor Day. How true this analogy is. By Memorial Day, we have our staffs back at peak levels, most of the training is done, the operation is in full swing and most members and clientele are back in the game. How many of us look forward to the Labor Day weekend? Daytime temperatures are moderating and nighttime temperatures are beginning to cool. It is a great feeling to hit that weekend, knowing aerification is just around the corner and after that, the first frost will take care of the annuals. Soon leaves are falling, and you are thinking about blowing out the irrigation system, winter fungicide applications and the golf season is coming to an end. For most, it is the thunderstorms, the heat and humidity and the long days that linger around the 4th of July that make us welcome the fall. It is a funny business, we are in, and most of what we do, all of what we do, is tied to the weather, and sometimes there is not much we can do about it. As a wise old Superintendent once said, if you can make it to August 15th without losing any turf, you have made it through another year. How true that is.

Another sort of record/recognition needs to go out to a couple of Superintendents from the Midwest. Paul Voykin, longtime Superintendent at Briarwood Country Club was inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame in October. I had the pleasure of attending his ceremony, and can assure you Paul made all of us honored and proud to be part of the Midwest.

Congratulations Paul. Tim Anderson, CGCS, MG from Naperville Country Club was awarded GCSAA’s Leo Feser Award for the best Superintendent written article in GCM, “Shoot The Elephants First”. Most of you have read the article (in *On Course*) and if you have not, make sure you do. It is excellent. Congratulations Tim. Congratulations also go out to Scott Pavalko and his staff at Cog Hill. From all accounts, the golf course was in excellent condition for the BMW Championship. Commendations are due to you and your staff for producing such excellent playing conditions during one of the most difficult growing seasons in history. Congratulations Scott. These accomplishments speak volumes to the talent, dedication and hard work of the members of MAGCS, you all should be proud.

Finally I would like to say it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as President of MAGCS this past year. I remember the first board meeting I attended in 2005, and Tim Anderson pointing out jokingly “the nine years go by really fast”. Well Tim, it has not been nine years, but I can honestly say that it has gone fast. And when things go by fast, it usually means you have enjoyed what you have been doing. I would also like to thank all the current board members and committee members for the time and effort you have put into MAGCS. All have done a great job in running MAGCS and you will continue to do so in the future. Finally, a big thank you to Luke Cella for doing such a great job of running the day-to-day activities of the Association, he makes being on the Board of Directors and part of the Association a pleasure. **-OC**