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President's Message

The Chicago District Golf Foundation and the University of Illinois have recently joined forces to provide Chicago area golf clubs with another valuable tool in maintaining the finest golf turf in the country. Preliminary proposals for funding a Turfgrass Specialist for golf courses in Chicago were recently approved by the CDGF board. The person who would be hired for this position would coordinate research being done on Chicago golf courses by the U of I and also be available to local superintendents to help solve unusual problems that develop during the season. This idea was the product of a number of meetings of the CDGF-Turfgrass Research Advisory Committee which is composed of several area golf course superintendents. Carl Hopphan of Evanston Golf Club, the chairman of CDGF-TRAC, has been most instrumental in bringing this idea to reality. The MAGCS owes Carl and his committee a big "THANK YOU" for all the time and effort they have put into this project. Of course many thanks to CDGF and CDGA Executive Director Dennis Davenport who are responsible for so much of what golf is in Chicago today. The CDGA and MAGCS has a strong relationship that we hope grows and matures even more in the future.

Make your plans now to attend the ITF Golf Day at Itasca Country Club on September 24. Get your greens committee, owners, pros, managers together and form your foursome to support turfgrass research. This is a good opportunity for people from your club to meet and talk with the people from the U of I. There was a very good turnout of MAGCS members at the Turf Field Days in Champaign. This shows the interest in the research at the U of I is growing more each year. If you couldn't make it this year, plan to attend next year.

I hope by the time you read this I will have gotten some rain to green up my roughs and give my irrigation system a rest. It has been a strange year for precipitation with areas getting some rainfall and a mile or two away areas never got a drop. It may not have been as hot as 83' but it has been every bit as dry. I hope you were one of the lucky ones that got sufficient rain, but if you weren't, sit back and enjoy the coming fall season with the rest of us. You deserve it!

Roger &. Stero

Roger Stewart, CGCS

MAGCS Directors Column

The 1984 British Open Old Course, St. Andrews, Scotland

by Joe P. Williamson, CGCS Briar Ridge Country Club

I must admit that when I first played a Scottish golf course, I didn't think much of it. On that basis, the old saying, "First impressions are lasting," made me less than complimentary about the staging of this year's British Open.

Yet that is far from the case. I was avidly looking forward to the contest over what I read is one of the finest settings, greatest tests in golf.

This is all based on the fact that St. Andrews grew on me. Those early impressions of Scottish golf courses were happily misplaced because the more you play these courses, the more you like it.

When the grandstands are packed around the first and eighteenth in front of such appreciative fans, it's like being royalty driving up a crowd-lined street.

It's easy to wax lyrical on such occasions, but I don't know of anything to compare with a St. Andrews Open, and the course is at the heart of the whole scenario. Architecturally, it's a magnificent layout, but it doesn't show its true character unless the wind blows.

Like most links courses, it is built with the wind in mind. With only two par-threes and two par-fives, it's a difficult test in the wind. But, in easier conditions, the par 72 was certain to be beaten by many players.

There are certain pundits who maintain that the way to play the old course is to hit left all the time. But that doesn't necessarily ring true. Like many links, the premium is on shot placement because the bunkers are so well set out.

And when you remember there are more than 160 traps on the old course, that's a mighty lot of sand. You've got to be one hell of a player, or have the greatest good fortune to avoid them all in a round, let alone throughout a tournament like the Open.

Some players like to play down the right and that means flirting with the gorse and bunkers going out and with the outof-bounds on the majority of the homeward holes. But, on that route, you get the better shots into the play. As dry as Scotland was, a lot of the players were hitting the ball down the left with a lot of roll. This allowed them to hit lofted shots into the greens over bunkers and more bunkers.

But, even then, it isn't plain sailing, simply because the greens at St. Andrews are far from easy. Take the twelfth, for instance. It's only 312 yards long, but it would be folly to think it was a simple task.

One thing you **don't** want to do is drive straight down the middle because four troublesome bunkers are ready to trap you. The best route is to play right, parallel with the River Eden, to the most generous part of the fairway. But, from there, you're hitting to the narrowest part of the green. Making things even more difficult is a ridge running across the putting surface, and the pin is invariably somewhere along that ridge. So your second shot requires the maximum of skill and touch to finish near the flag for any birdie opportunity.

I could go on and on about both the British Open and St. Andrews. I have just scratched the surface of what was a fantastic trip. Every person working in the golf profession should try and attend the Open to not only compare the playing conditions, but also compare the architecture. I believe that the first visit to a links course would give everyone a new prospective into what I will call "American Golf Course Design" compared to the "Scottish Golf Course Design". There are great differences in both aspects as I am sure most people observed while watching the open on television.

WHITHER THE WEATHER? (Sequel to article in July, 1984 issue of The Bull Sheet) by Paul M. Alexander, Ph.D. Chemlawn Corporation

The one consistent thing about Mother Nature is her inconsistency. For over 30 years, I have yearned for that elusive "perfect growing season", only to be disappointed year after year. Admittedly, some years have been better than others, but the spring and summer of 1983 just about set an all-time low for adverse growing conditions for turf, trees and ornamentals. Then came the spring and early summer of 1984!

In my travels throughout the east, south and mid-west areas of the country this year, I have been told that spring was practically non-existent. Seems as though we went from winter to summer and this wreaked havoc with the health and growth of both turf and ornamentals.

As July ended, many of our franchise people throughout the country reported on the weather of the previous two months. June was very wet (up to 16'' of rainfall in some areas) and unseasonable cool. July, in many areas, was hot and dry for the first 3 weeks, then the rains and very cool weather set in. In the Atlanta area, however, the reverse was true — an all-time hot spell and drought occurred in June, and July ushered in very cool, wet weather.

What has all of the foregoing to do with our work? As turf management professionals, you already know. When Mother Nature acts in such a capricious manner, living plants (and other organisms) have no choice but to react accordingly.

In hot, dry weather, our cool-season turf tends to go dormant, certain weeds and insects grow and multiply, **and** the golfers continue to play. For those of you who experienced the cool, wet weather, certain other problems arose — that same grass grew rapidly (whether you could mow or not) and, if it was too wet, the root systems shortened up because of oxygen depletion — **and** the golfers continued to play.

Surely, these are conditions that test the abilities and capabilities of all golf course superintedents, but the truly professional people invariably come through. They may not be able to control the weather (or golfer traffic), but they can control certain agronomic practices such as irrigation (time and amount), mowing (height, frequency, etc.), fertilization (timing, rates and type), pest control (diseases, weeds and insects), thatch control and aerification.

I am hoping that the remainder of 1984 will be kind to all of us and that Mother Nature will relent a little bit so that our turf, trees and ornamentals can recover from the extremely bad weather of the past 12 to 14 months. Best of luck to all of you!

Landscape Renovations on the Golf Course

by Randy Wahler Knollwood Club

I have always considered my knowledge of woody plant materials and ability to use them in landscape designs to be one of my main strengths. Little did I realize that the countless hours learning plant materials and design techniques at the University of Illinois would play such a large role in being a golf course superintendent. I was inspired by Dr. Michael Dirr and William Nelson to learn the countless varieties of plants and to be able to manipulate them to create the desired effect. Upon graduation from college, I enthusiastically used these skills on the golf course and private residential and commercial locations.

There are a number of areas on the golf course that I consider "prime targets" for landscaping. These areas would include:

TEES — The most important tee would be the first tee, the start of the golf course, Landscapes around tees should create a close, intimate feeling with the golfer. This is also an ideal location for speciman plants and flowers.

PRACTICE AREA — Landscaping is needed on the Practice Tee to separate it from the golf course, to provide protection from errant shots, and to provide shade for those hot summer days. This is also an ideal location for speciman plants and flowers.

GREEN AND BUNKER BACKDROPS — Use of larger plant materials behind bunkers and putting greens to frame and distinguish from the rest of the golf course. We generally use finer textured material that does not distract or overwhelm the green or bunker.

PONDS — Excellent opportunity to use materials indigenous to wet areas; i.e., willows, cattails, waterlilies. Perfect area for developing interesting reflections with flowers.

NATURAL, WOODED AREAS — These are good sheltered areas to use the ericaceous plants; i.e., hollies, rhododenrons, pieris, etc. Also an opportunity to use shrubs that attract birds.

ENTRANCES — Prime spot; first impression of the entire property. Good location for flowers, speciman plants, and a landscape that creates a warm, inviting atmosphere.

A few procedures have to be followd before we actually start the renovation and landscaping of a golf course area. These include a site analysis, landscape objectives, and the actual design.

Probably the most important step is the site analysis. Generally before we landscape an area on the golf course we inspect and take notes on the area for up to a year before we start the project. This analysis should include:

- 1. Soil and moisture conditions
- 2. Available sunlight
- 3. Existing vegetation
- 4. Topography
- 5. Effect on the game
- 6. Existing utilities, drainage, and irrigation lines
- 7. Traffic patterns

All of these factors will ultimately affect the landscape design. Ignoring one of these factors many times results in a faulty finished product.

Before starting the design, the landscape objectives must be determined. Is the main objective to control traffic or screen (cont'd, page 6)



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(Renovations cont'd.)

the next tee? Are we trying to highlight an area with speciman plants to blend plants with the existing environment? Frequently there are a combination of objectives that must be met. The art of designing is satisfying all of these objectives while remaining within the confinements of the site analysis. We generally find the design is simplified by meeting all of these guidelines.

The final procedure before construction is the actual design. one of the most important design principles we learned at the University of Illinois was the name, S.V. BESS. Actually these letters stood for:

SIMPLICITY — Avoiding too much variety and detail but not becoming over-repetitious.

VARIETY — The use of differing materials, shapes, forms, and colors to form various contrasts.

BALANCE — Weighing the materials equally on each side of the design using size, color, and textures.

EMPHASIS — The use of dominant materials to direct the viewer to the important areas of the design.

SEQUENCE — The orderly progression of forms, textures, colors from one side of the design to the other.

SCALE — Keeping the size of the materials used in proportion to the existing environment.

By combining these principles we are able to develop a unified design that is pleasing to the eye. A few of these concepts; i.e., simplicity and variety, balance and emphasis, are controls over each other. One principle prevents another from dominating the design.

We feel it is important to blend the design with the existing environment. The design should follow the general characteristics of the golf course. The landscaping on an older, stately country club would differ from a new, condominiumgolf course development. Do not try to force an idea where it does not belong in the first place! The design should also blend well with the actual site location. Using exotic plants in a naturalized setting would be awkward and out of place.

Once we have a design concept we start with the "Block Method". Blocks are drawn representing the plant materials to scale. They are arranged according to size, leaf color, and texture. By utilizing the "S.V. BESS" design principles, the desired block arrangement is achieved.

The specified characteristics of each block will limit the choice of plants to a very few. The selection will also be limited by environmental factors; i.e., shade, soil moisture, hardiness, etc.

With this accomplished, we draw a rough design substituting plants until we find the desired product. The rough design is transferred to transparent drafting paper. The design should include:

- 1. A border around the outside edge
- 2. An identification list for plants used
- 3. A label box containing area, architect, scale, date

The entire design layout should be well-organized and neat. This is the "first impression" in accomplishing the landscape project. At least six blueprints are made of the design for presentation to the Board, construction guidelines, and filing the later reference.

With the design approved we are ready to start the construction. First the materials should be ordered two weeks in advance to avoid any delays. Soil preparation is of utmost impor-



tance. The topsoil should consist of six inches of black dirt. Proper drainage should be achieved by surface contouring or installing drain pipe under the planting bad. Occasionally we test the soil for nutrient deficiencies or surpluses. Where broadleaf evergreens are used the soil must be modified to meet the requirements of these plants.

Any lumber, stone or masonry construction should be completed before planting. Proper construction methods should be utilized to withstand soil heaving from winter freezing and the pressures exerted from soil backfill.

Once the plants are in, an attractive mulch can be used to protect the plant roots, conserve moisture, and decrease weed invasion. We normally use a shredded bark or wood chip material. The most important construction step is the cleanup. Plant tags should be removed, broken branches pruned, and the entire area fine-cleaned. Nothing detracts more from a landscaped area than a messy work site that has not been cleaned!

Landscaping various areas not only upgrades the appearance of the golf course but establishes member awareness of various plant materials. It has been a personal hobby from which I have attained a large amount of accomplishment and satisfaction. I consider my ability to design and landscape a valuable golf course superintendent skill.

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Let us hear from you — (312) 595-7204 LARRY JOSEPH or ART DAVENPORT

A USGA Zontek Update by Stanley J. Zontek

North-Central Director

As is becoming traditional, I am sending some thoughts on the condition of the golf courses I have seen in my travels so far this season as an agronomist for the USGA. It may be interesting to compare the problems and situations of other golf courses to your own.

After traveling my eight state region, in talking to some of our other staff agronomists, one thing is clear ... this part of the country escaped practically all forms of winterkill. This cannot be said for the Northern and central parts of Ohio and the South. In many ways, this has been one of the most difficult years ever for bermudagrass winterkill. It has been said that there is not one bermudagrass green alive in Dallas. It probably is true. The bermudagrass was killed around Christmas time following a quick drop in temperatures. If you watch golf on television, the early tour events held throughout Texas, you saw the problems they were having with bermudagrass kill. This winter injury of warm season grasses extended through southern Illinois and into Kentucky. Fortunately, zoysiagrass was not effected all that much, it was the bermudagrass.

For those golf course Superintendents the winter of 1983/1984 will go down as one of the worst ever for bermudagrass winterkill. On the other hand, Superintendents in this part of the country should remember this winter as one of the best (with the exception of Ohio) winters in recent memory.

(cont'd. page 9)



USGA Update

Grasswise, following the miserable summer of last year most all golf courses that we see are holding up quite well. The weather has been hot but not too hot, humid but not too humid and diseases, so far, have been mild. The only exception to this has been an outbreak of a "Gaeumannomyces" type of fungus that is effecting bentgrass roots. It is not effecting annual bluegrass just bentgrass on greens and an analysis through a microscope shows runner hyphae coming out of the grass' roots. I believe that Dr. Joseph Vargas is working on this disease with a grant partially funded by the USGA Green Section as well as Dr. Henry Wilkinson from the University of Illinois. Some control has been achieved in the lab but ... field work is ongoing now to determine how these fungicides work and what exactly are the factors that lead up to this disease. Visually, it looks like a bad case of Helminthosporium leaf spot or melting out but it could well be one of these strange root and crown rot diseases that only works below the surface of the soil, which makes their diagnosis ... extremely difficult.

Actually, except for this "new" type of disease, problems throughout the region have not been all that serious. In fact, the overall appearance and playability of most of the golf courses that we see is excellent. The fairways on those golf courses using the lightweight 3- and 5-gang mowers are responding exceptionally well to this type of fairway mowing program. In fact, the best fairways we see are those where this lightweight equipment is used in general and where the clippings are removed in particular. It certainly is no panacea but it is the best thing that has come along in a long time for improved fairway playability and more reliable fairway grasses through the summer stress period.

In summary, to-date things are looking pretty good. The golf course Superintendents in this part of the country could use a good summer ... especially after last year. One never knows what the next few months will bring but to-date, the overall condition of most golf courses has been excellent. Let's just hope the weather holds so that the 1984 season will go down in history as one of the best for golf course turf following the 1983 season which was undoubtedly one of the worst.

Job Opening

Fort Wayne Country Club. 75 year old private, memberowned country club with 18 holes. Bentgrass/poa annua greens, tees and fairways with bluegrass roughs. Single row automatic watering system. Club instituted use of hydraulic fairway mowing in spring of 1984. Superintendent will be fully responsible for top quality maintenance of entire club grounds including golf course and perimeter of all club buildings as well as preparation and achievement of approved annual operating budget. Salary range of \$35,000-\$50,000 commensurate with qualifications. Benefits include full GCSA package, life & medical insurance, pension plan and relocation expenses. Send resume in confidence to: Norman J. Spitzig, Jr., CCM, General Manager, Fort Wayne Country Club, 5221 Covington Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46804.



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