

the Bull Sheet

Official publication of the MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS.

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On Course With The President

by Alan Fierst

First and foremost ... Happy Holidays to all members of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents, their families, and to the many allied friends of the "Midwest". Best wishes, too, for an "evergreen" 1994.

Just a few notes as the first of a series of "President Messages" to come forth from my desk. Here goes ...

Another "Midwest Clinic at Medinah" has come and gone. This year's offerings were punctuated by the continued (and seemingly never ending) discussion of green speed and employment contracts/agreements. About 130 interested individuals were treated to a lively and in-depth treatise on each of the issues. It made for thoughtful insight and a few new wrinkles on subjects that never seem to go away. The consensus was, however, that every golf course superintendent is destined to be carrying, at all times, a "stimpmeter" in one pocket and his/her employment agreement/contract in another. Why is it that employment security for golf course superintendents in the nineties seems inextricably linked to the two of these?

And ... The "Midwest" has long been the privileged with the careful guidance, expertise, and dedication of Ray Schmitz. It has been a pleasure serving with Ray over the many years of



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activity on the MAGCS Board and the many committees within that group. His leadership efforts have been tireless, and there was always a willingness on Ray's part to efficiently and elegantly guide and manage any detail of the association's business. Ray served the association and the membership well, and we thank him for his fine effort. Now that he has assumed elder statesman status, he can relax a bit as we look to him for sage observations on all the issues that matter. Great work, and Thanks, Ray.

And finally ... It is, at the same time, both an exhilarating and humbling experience being asked to direct an association with the scope and dynamics of the "Midwest". It is very flattering to know the guidance of our fine association and the collective trust of the membership now focus in my direction. After many years of serving in a variety of both active and passive support roles for the association, the mantle of responsibility has shifted in my direction. I seek your support. Thank you for your confidence.

Director's Column "My Rookie Season"

by Kevin Czerkies, CGCS

I have just completed my first year as a director of the M.A.G.C.S. Looking back over the last 12 months, it has been a very busy but satisfying time for me.

Once elected to the board, I started wondering which committee I would be assigned. I eagerly awaited that first board meeting when committee assignments would be handed out by President Tim Kelly. At last the big day came. I was given Arrangements. At first I thought "All right — an easy committee!" It didn't take too long for me to realize how wrong I was.

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The meeting sites and dates were already set for 1993, however, the fun was just beginning. The initial task of the arrangements committee was to work in conjunction with the golf committee to finalize the new pre-registration and pre-payment policy. This policy was met with negative reactions by some M.A.G.C.S. members. With the M.A.G.C.S. membership growing larger each year, it is often necessary to limit the amount of golfers at our meetings. There was only one meeting throughout 1993 that didn't have a size limitation imposed.

Another board directive was to plan a family event. A picnic and Kane County Cougars baseball game was attended by over 90 M.A.G.C.S. members and their guests. The 1993 monthly meetings were far from routine. Heavy rains at Poplar Creek, forcing a 9 hole event, is just one explanation for Excedrin's rising stock value. My hat goes off to all the host superintendents, you all did an outstanding job.

Before becoming a board member I was told that a lot of time would have to be devoted to the association. Little did I know that between monthly M.A.G.C.S., board and committee meetings, I would attend 29 meetings throughout the past 12 months. In addition to these meetings, I have spent countless hours on the phone finalizing plans with the host

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superintendents and their clubs. I would like to thank my wife and kids for being so patient with me.

The most important lesson I learned during my first year as a Director is that no matter what decisions the board or I make, you can't please everyone. I hope all of you will enjoy the meeting sites set up for 1994, but for now, enjoy your off season and get to know your family again. Happy Holidays to all.



MAGCS Welcomes New Executive Secretary

On November 1, Joan Minnis began her tenure as the Executive Secretary of the MAGCS. Joan and her husband Kris, along with their 1 year old son Benjamin reside in Aurora. They grew up in Batavia, where they own a lot and will eventually build a new home. Joan has been an advertising assistant, a legal secretary and currently she serves as the Membership Director of Stonebridge Country Club. The MAGCS is lucky to have found someone with Joan's qualifications to serve our association as we continue to grow and prosper. The new address for all correspondence is:

MAGCS, P. O. Box 204, North Aurora, IL 60542. The new phone and fax number is: (708) 896-6811.



"Ray Gerber Editorial Award Winner"

This year's winner is Joel Purpur, Superintendent at River Forest Golf Club on his article which appeared in the March 1993 issue. "PR & Chemical Usage" was the overall winner out of 17 articles that qualified.



Editor's Award

This is an award given to someone who may not qualify for the "Ray Gerber Editorial Award" but who has contributed articles to **The Bull Sheet** on a somewhat regular basis. Jim Reed is the winner for his articles, "On the Waterfront" which ran for 12 months during 1992 and 1993.

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Using Weeds as Indicators of Turf Management and Environmental Conditions

by Tom Voigt, Extension Turfgrass Specialist
Dept. of Horticulture, University of Illinois

It is commonly thought that large weed populations are responsible for driving desirable grasses from a turf area. In reality, the presence of weeds, and the lack of turf, is often an indication of the turf's inability to compete and survive in settings where weeds can. Although it is impractical to expect totally weed-free turf, the presence of large numbers of weeds is often an indication of problems in the growing environment or in turfgrass culture. Employing recommended cultural techniques and altering the growing environment can improve turf quality and health and, thus, reduce the need for pesticide applications.

Reasons for weed invasion — Large populations of weeds in turf are usually indications of:

- improper turf selection;
- poor culture;
- insect pest or disease invasion;
- excessive traffic; or
- unfavorable growth environment.

Primary to any turf management problem is properly selecting the turf to be used. For the golf course manager, this is generally not a problem area; there is a limited choice of turfgrasses appropriate for use on greens, tees, and fairways. Golf course turf selection is usually dictated by the desired quality, budget, and amount of play, not primarily by a desire to keep weed populations to a minimum.

In any turf setting, following proper turfgrass selection, the second line of defense against weed and pest invasion is the use of correct mowing, irrigating, fertilizing, and cultivating practices. Proper mowing is critical to turfgrass health and appearance. Turfgrasses mowed too short become open, inviting weed invasion. Also, when mowed too short, turfgrass may develop inadequate root systems that allow plants to more readily succumb to insect and disease pests. When allowed to grow too tall, turfgrasses can appear unkempt and coarse-textured. Golf course playability is also altered when turves are allowed to grow tall. Basic mowing recommendations include frequent mowing at the tallest height recommended for the specific turf and use.

Irrigating turfgrasses is also important. Over-watered turf may grow too rapidly, develop shallow root systems, and be prone to invasions of weeds, insects, and diseases. Under-irrigated turf may become open and sparse, develop a poor appearance, and also allow weed invasions. Under most circumstances, when watering, water infrequently and deeply to the depth of the root system. When irrigated lightly and frequently, weed seeds (especially those of annual weeds) can germinate and readily develop into mature weeds because the soil surface is never allowed to dry out.

Fertilizers maintain turfgrass density, vigor, and color. Inadequate nitrogen fertilization leads to open turf that is readily invaded by weeds. Inadequate amounts of other minerals in the soil, especially potassium, phosphorus, iron, and sulfur,

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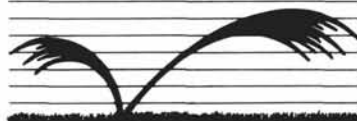
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(Weeds as Indicators cont'd.)

can also reduce turf color, disease resistance, and stress tolerance. Conduct soil tests and supply these elements as recommended by test results. It is important, however, not to supply excessive amounts of phosphorus to established turf. Excessive amounts of phosphorus at the soil surface can encourage development of germinating weed seeds.

Cultivation activities include core aeration, slicing, and vertical mowing. These activities can reduce thatch and prepare turf for overseeding. Core aeration is also useful for reducing soil compaction. Conduct cultivation activities during periods of active growth when turfgrasses are best able to recover from these practices. In areas where annual weeds are a particular problem, conduct cultivation activities during autumn.

Insect pests and disease pests can thin and weaken turves, allowing weed invasion. Control these invaders by using good culture and the appropriate pesticides when necessary.

Excessive traffic physically damages turf and also compacts soil. Thin turf, prone to weed invasion, can result. Perennial ryegrass and tall fescues have the ability to tolerate wear better than most other cool season grasses. Where appropriate,

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use these grasses in high traffic areas. In addition, where possible, use lightweight mowing equipment and alter the equipment's path to spread wear evenly over the use area.

Compaction reduces the quantity of large, gas-containing pore spaces in soils. Some weeds (e.g., goosegrass and knotweed) are more tolerant of low soil oxygen conditions than are most turfgrasses. Cultivate these areas so that the turf can better compete with weeds.

Along with compacted soils, other unfavorable growth environments can also create growing conditions to which weeds are more adapted than is turf. Shade that reduces light quantity and quality favors weeds (e.g., creeping charley and common chickweed) rather than turf. Prune or remove trees to allow more light to reach the growing area. This also can increase air movement and decrease disease problems. Excessively wet or dry soils also create environments in which weeds often grow better than does turf. If possible, provide external and internal drainage to move excessive water from the turf root zone. Also, supplemental irrigation can be used in dry periods. In general, try to create growing environments that favor turf and not weeds.

Some weeds are not very specific as to the conditions necessary for invasion. For example, dandelions (*Taraxicum officinale*) and quackgrass (*Elytrigia repens* [*Agropyron repens*]) can occur in a variety of environmental or turf management conditions.

These lists may not prove to be true for every weed situation. For instance, yellow nutsedge, once established, can tolerate dry soils. This weed is, however, more commonly found in moist conditions, especially when first becoming established.

Use this list as a guide when diagnosing turf problems. It, along with knowledge of turf growth requirements, can be of assistance when determining needed changes in growth and management conditions that favor turf health and quality.

(continued page 9)

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(Weeds as Indicators cont'd.)

Weeds specific to certain environmental and management conditions — Often, the presence of specific weeds in turf provides clues to the type(s) of environmental and management problems. By learning about weeds that commonly occur under certain conditions, managers can more easily identify these problems and correct them. The following list:

Acid Soils

bentgrasses (*Agrostis palustris*)
red sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)

Compacted Soils

annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*)
bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*)
common chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
goosegrass (*Elusine indica*)
knotweed (*Polygonum aviculare*)
mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium vulgatum*)
prostrate spurge (*Euphorbia supina*)

Dry Soil

black medic (*Medicago lupulina*)
carpetweed (*Mollugo verticillata*)
red sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)
sandbur (*Cenchrus pauciflorus*)

Dry, Infertile Soils

yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

High-Fertility Soils

annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*)
bentgrasses (*Agrostis palustris*)
bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*)
crabgrasses (*Digitaria* spp.)
mallow (*Malva neglecta*)
purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*)

Low-Fertility Soils

plantains (*Plantago* spp.)
red sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)
smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*)
timothy (*Phleum pratense*)

Low Mowing Height

annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*)
bentgrasses (*Agrostis* spp.)
bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*)
crabgrasses (*Digitaria* spp.)
white clover (*Trifolium repens*)

Moist or Poorly Drained Soils

annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*)
bentgrasses (*Agrostis* spp.)
common chickweed (*Stellaria media*)

crabgrasses (*Digitaria* spp.)
goosegrass (*Elusine indica*)
ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*)
mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium vulgatum*)
speedwells (*Veronica* spp.)
violets (*Viola* spp.)
yellow nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)

Moist, Fertile Soils

curled dock (*Rumex crispus*)
henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*)
yellow wood sorrel (*Oxalis stricta*)

Moist, Infertile Soils

white clover (*Trifolium repens*)

Moist Shade

annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*)
nimblewill (*Muhlenbergia shreberi*)
rough bluegrass (*Poa trivialis*)
violets (*Viola* spp.)

New Seedlings

barnyardgrass (*Echinochloa crusgalli*)
crabgrasses (*Digitaria* spp.)
henbit (fall plantings) (*Lamium amplexicaule*)
purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*)
yellow foxtail (*Setaria glauca*; also listed as *S. lutescens*)

Shade

annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*)
common chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*)
mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium vulgatum*)
nimblewill (*Muhlenbergia shreberi*)
violets (*Viola* spp.)

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In Springfield, the Illinois General Assembly voted on and passed Senate Bill 240, amending the Environmental Protection Act. This bill prohibits open burning of landscape waste (leaves) in any county with more than 100,000 inhabitants.

Because of the land use diversity in our state, the bill provides an exemption for agriculture purposes, nurseries, and conservation management purposes. Air quality is to be a top priority as respiratory problems are increasing dramatically.

Most metropolitan counties will be affected. I doubt if golf courses will be considered as agriculture.

by Bruce Williams on Bulletin Board

Notes & Pictures from the 41st Annual Midwest Turf Clinic

Notes by the Editor & Pictures by Ray Schmitz

Bob Maibusch talk on Great Britain was very interesting with the various comparisons between the states and England. Most of the greenkeepers are "hands on" guys that run a crew of only 6-7 men on the crew and with a budget of about \$140,000 that includes salaries and maintenance supplies, etc. They get by with about \$25.00 per acre for fertilizer, herbicides and fungicides per year.



Jim Lathan, USGA as usual gave an excellent talk on the speed of greens. His quote "Speed kills. Stimp meter readings above 9' put a tremendous amount of stress on the grass plant." There is "AS" and "BS" management of greens in the USGA history. The "BS" stands for, before stimp meters and the "AS" is after stimp meters. 1993 proved to be a very difficult year for many courses with the wet spring, flooding, and many overcast days.



Larry Chirico, Supt. Course #3, Medinah spoke on their green management program. Embark is sprayed in April to suppress seed head at 4 oz./acre. Enhance is sprayed in 2 week intervals beginning in May to regulate "Poa annua". Fertility they use 5-1-10 plus Hydro Wet at 1#N/M in late November. Lescro iron plus 12-0-0 with chelated iron at 2 oz./M every 2 weeks during season. Green speed at 10'. Jac walkers set at .125, greens with heavy poa are set at .135 on the Jac walkers.



Tim Davis, Shoreacres C.C. uses Cutlass on greens at 3 oz./acre. Applies .10 to .35#N/M all sprayable. No groomers used, but will roll his greens before tournaments. Uses Cutlass as a dormant spray under covers.



(continued page 12)

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