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# the Bull Sheet

Official publication of the MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS.

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## On Course With the President

Rapidly, it is becoming the time when we need to be looking inward to ourselves as members of an association with the impact and size of the "Midwest". As turfgrass associations go, we are huge. Huge! I am told by the fine GCSAA staff personnel in Lawrence, KS that we, the members of the Midwest, can basically pride ourselves as the largest free standing singular chapter in the association. Six hundred some-odd regional members and a GCSAA voting strength of over 300 does not comprise a small group, no matter the discipline. We are, as an association, a fine and diverse group of turfgrass professionals choosing to congregate under the banner of the MAGCS. We do a fine job of representing ourselves as turfgrass professionals and membership in our association provides a comfortable sense of belonging and purpose that surely must be fulfilling. Or is it? I'm not so sure ...

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*The members of the Midwest, can basically pride ourselves as the largest free standing singular chapter in the association.*

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We do a terrific job of providing for ourselves. The quality of the MAGCS monthly meetings, golf events, educational presentations, and social functions are unquestionably top rank. The people of the association simply could not be any better. We can count our membership the finest group of commercial and corporate members anywhere and they unfailingly support the Midwest. The individual MAGCS members are staunch supporters of the association and essentially provide the fine nucleus from which we gain our strength. The greatest asset of our own "Midwest" association is the individual and collective strength of it's membership.

But what do we as an association accomplish? Plainly, if sheer numbers are a valid indicator, there must be something of quality and desirability at the present Midwest association level. But I fear it tends to be focused selfishly inward and serving only of ourselves. The question arises about the defined purpose or mission of the Midwest. Indeed, why is it we are here? Is it simply for the business of putting on a few

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*But what do we  
as an association accomplish?*

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summer golf extravaganzas and a few more educational offerings? Or can there be more? Realistically, how well do we support the area of turfgrass research or even the CDGA turfgrass advisor? Oh, we dribble a small contribution to the ITF, and we barely seem to be able to find some token dollars for GCSAA or USGA sponsored turfgrass research projects. Since Dr. Randy Kane has been in the area, only in the recent past has the MAGCS seen fit to contribute to his needs or even to insure that he is sufficiently funded to remain in this area. There are other examples (the CDGA/U.I. experimental green at Cantigny, for instance) and endless other possibilities for MAGCS directed research funding. There are also

(continued page 4)

(On Course With the President continued)

the very real possibilities and needs for Chicago area charities to be recipients of MAGCS contributions. Not to mention the salient benefits of some very positive public relations for the golf course superintendent and the golf industry. The need and the desire for MAGCS sponsored contributory funding is there and we as an association must explore how we can become a driving force in that type of funding. Yes, the P.R. angle may be ultimately self-serving and motivated to our own benefit, but this notion that we exist simply and essentially to best serve ourselves is decidedly not positive "spin" for anyone. It may well boil down to defining the very essence of why we do in fact exist.

Clearly it is time the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents begins to define its contributory role and become a dominant force in the arena of association sponsored and funded beneficiaries. Be it support of turfgrass science and research or perhaps contributions for an association sponsored charitable group, the time is now. Sadly there are far less accomplished chapters doing far more than we in this critical area. We have lagged behind too long and there is no defense in dragging our feet any longer.

ATF

## He's At It Again

by Fred Opperman, Editor

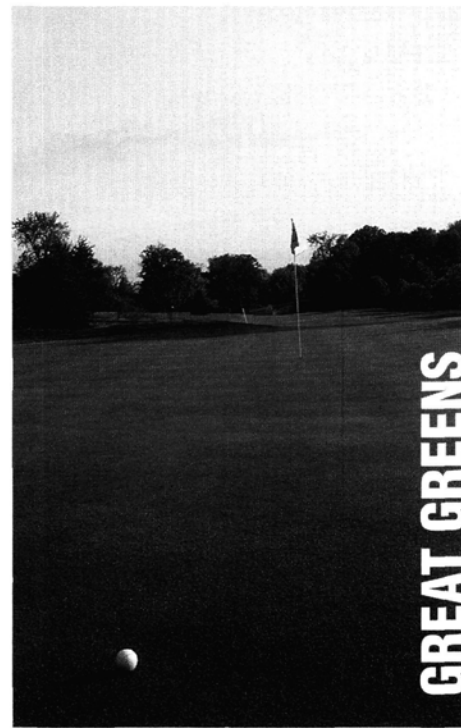
Once again, on September 1, 1994, on his noon program, Paul Harvey stated that the golf courses were killing wildlife in their quest to keep the grass green. He inferred that due to the heavy pressure from the golfers to keep everything green that the superintendents were over-applying chemicals; and in turn these chemicals are killing off the birds and other wildlife.

Numerous associations, individual golf course superintendents, and educated others have written to Mr. Harvey explaining the factual findings of many studies and reports. These letters and reports have fallen on deaf ears. To my knowledge Mr. Harvey has never responded to any of these letters. He continues to sensationalize through his radio broadcasts these came falsehoods.

I think we may be writing to the wrong person when we address our letters to Mr. Harvey. We may get a better response by addressing our letters that substantiate the truth of the matter to the companies that he is endorsing. I once felt that Paul Harvey was gospel. I felt that the products he was endorsing must be good. Truthfully, I am now suspect of what he is pitching. He is just after the buck.

If Paul Harvey isn't factual and not researching the truth of what he is reporting, how can we believe in the products that he is selling? We need to get a campaign going to write to the car company, the saw manufacturer, the vacuum cleaner company, and the many other companies, plus WGN radio and state our case. I'm sure they would like to hear that a large segment of their consumers believe their ace pitch-man is spreading falsehoods.

If Paul Harvey is after the buck, maybe we can have some affect on the buck that he receives from the companies that he endorses. Maybe ...



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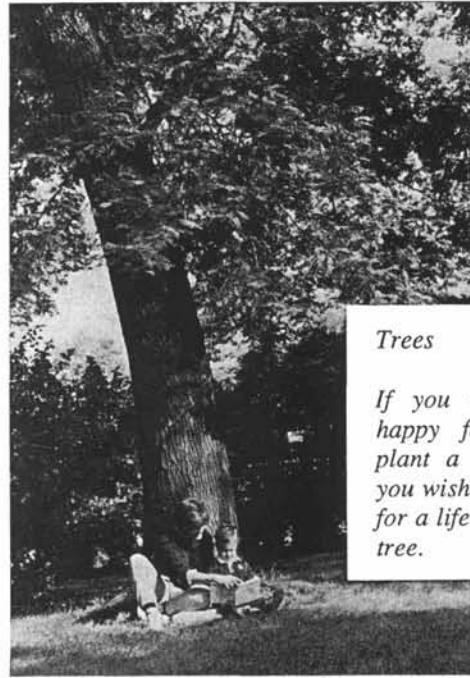
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# Keeping Reels Sharp

by Monty Montague  
National Mower & Turfco, Inc.

Reel mowers are high-precision machines that provide top-quality cutting. To deliver such cutting performance, they employ a combination of a reel, often spinning between 600 and 2,000 rpm., and a bedknife.

Because those two elements combine to do the cutting, they should be adjusted precisely. There should be little or no contact between the reel and the bedknife, and the leading edges of both should be squared off — some manufacturers even believe there should be a “reverse angle,” and those vary from five to 15 degrees.

There are several ways to sharpen reels. The most commonly used is backlapping, which is actually a simple, inexpensive honing procedure that should be done after approximately 40 hours of cutting. Backlapping involves spinning the reels in reverse after applying (brushing) a special compound, and either backing the reel down to the bedknife or the bedknife to the reel, depending on the particular mower. The pressure between the reel and bedknife, combined with the sharpening compound acting as “liquid sandpaper” actually sharpens the reel blades. When the “grinding sound” stops, the backlapping process is usually complete.

Sharpening compounds come in a number of grits, from a very coarse 50 grit to a very fine 220 grit. Most people tend to use them in the 80 to 120 grit range.

There are two basic ways of spinning reels backward for backlapping. For reel mowers that are not hydraulically driven, there are electric backlappers. They cost about \$400 and can be hooked directly to the mower. Hydraulically driven reels, on the other hand, will probably have a backlapping switch on them.

Sometimes backlapping isn't enough. The next step is grinding and there are several ways to grind mower reels. The first is a spin grinder. Spin grinders range in cost from \$2,600 to \$20,000, so many sports turf managers will actually send their reels out for grinding. But whether you send your reels out for grinding or do it in house, the most important thing you do *before* is to check the reel for bearing wear and adjust end play. A worn reel, particularly an unevenly worn reel, could be the sign of an improper adjustment or even a worn bearing that needs replacement. If that same reel was sent out for grinding without the mechanical problem being corrected first, the reel and bedknife could “slap” during grinding and create a damaged or an unevenly sharpened reel. Solve any and all mechanical problems with your reels before you send them out for grinding — check your owner's manual for specific adjustment instructions.

Spin grinding is “flat-edged” grinding and is good until you have no relief left on your reel blade. Relief grinding creates an angle on the trailing edge of your blade. All blades come from their manufacturers with relief, and it reduces the pulling and tearing of grass when reels get dull. Relief also speeds up the backlapping of resharpener process. Some manufacturers believe it extends the life of the bedknife.

One of the most common tests for reel sharpness after backlapping, grinding, or relief grinding involves placing two pieces of newspaper between the reel and bedknife. If they cut the

(continued page 9) 6



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(Keeping the Reels Sharp continued)

first piece of paper and bend the second, then the mower is probably ready for action. It's important to repeat this test, not just in the center of the mower but at both ends. Improper adjustment or a worn bearing can lead to uneven sharpening and leave you with a conical reel.

How often you backlap, grind or relief your reels will, in large part, be determined by your specific situation. Factors include grass type, cutting frequency and height, topdressing frequency, obstacles and more — it all depends on use. If your reel mower is still cutting beautifully at the end of the season, there's not sense in grinding it. Again, the most crucial thing is to consistently check bearing wear or end play wear, and correct it immediately. If you make adjustments and still get end play, it's probably time to change the bearing — before you use any reel sharpening method.

Credit: **Hole Notes**, 7/94



## Super-N-Site

by Tony Rzadzki, C.G.C.S.  
Superintendent, Cantigny Golf

Our final MAGCS golf event meeting will be held October 10th at the resort at Oakbrook Hills. This event will be a two man scramble and Kerry promises to set the course to play **hard!** I said, "Kerry, what if Braunsky and Ray Schei are partners ... we'll be handing out prizes at midnight!" Kerry quickly calmed me down and explained that the Nugent designed, nine year old course was designed to 'play easy'. The owners, the Dial Soap company, wanted a resort community that was eye appealing, fun to play, and not overly difficult. Par at Oakbrook is 70 and plays to 6400 yards at the tips. Kerry told me that there is no water on the right on any holes, but plenty of landscape beds. So Eddie, you'll probably break a 'hundo' but bring along some mums to transplant later.

Kerry has a B.A. in Education from Illinois State and an Associates Degree in Turfgrass Management from Danville Community College. Kerry is also involved in politics, as you all know the man behind the scenes on the board of the MAGCS. Kerry's active interest in the Midwest Association has helped us progress and grow to some 600 members. Kerry's other interests include weekend softball, golf, and is a self-proclaimed, bonafide sports nut.

Oakbrook has invested some money this year (\$500K) in landscaping, cartpaths, and brick curbing at tees and greens. I'm sure that we will see some neat landscaping, play some fun golf, and enjoy a nice fall day. Don't worry, Kerry, I'll tell Eddie to bring some replacement bricks for your curbs too.

## Proper Pesticide Storage

by Cooperative Extension Service

With winter approaching, we need to remind ourselves of a few basic principles about proper pesticide storage.

Regardless of the size of your operation or the volume of materials you use, pesticides should be stored in a separate building, room, or enclosure. The storage area should be kept dry, reasonably cool, and out of direct sunlight. An exhaust fan should be used for proper ventilation to help reduce the temperature and build up of toxic fumes. Be sure to locate the exhaust fan where it will not damage plants or harm humans. Some pesticides have special storage requirements and require protection against freezing or extreme heat. As a general rule, most pesticides will begin to deteriorate at temperatures below 40°F. and above 90°F. Be sure to read the label for proper storage requirements. Pesticide bags, cartons and boxes should be stored off the floor on shelves or on pallets to avoid moisture and deterioration of the packaging. The storage area should be securely locked when not in use and warning signs with "**Danger — Pesticides, Keep Out**" should be posted on the door and other appropriate areas. Be sure not to store glass and metal pesticide containers near a heat source such as steam pipes or in direct sunlight. Heating of the container may result in expansion of the liquid contents and lead to an explosion. If you are using several different types of pesticides (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), be sure to keep each pesticide type in separate areas to avoid confusion and inadvertent misuse. Keep a current inventory of your materials as to purchase date, quantity, and condition of the container, and use up pesticides that may be reaching the limits of their shelf life storage. By doing this, you will reduce the volume of unused chemicals preventing a large disposal problem and avoid the mistake of spraying with a pesticide that has lost its pest controlling ability. **Under no circumstances should a pesticide be stored in a food or drink container!** When examining chemicals for evidence of deterioration, look for these warning signs:

Emulsifiable Concentrates: Milky coloration does not occur with the addition of water, sludge is present or any separation of components is evident in the container.

Oil Sprays: Milky coloration does not occur with the addition of water.

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# Leaves, Limbs, Needles & Boughs



by Fred Opperman

**Tree Trivia & Facts:** A fully grown deciduous tree can pull one ton of water from the soil each day. Planting three trees around each American home would save 10 to 50 percent of air-conditioning bills or as much as \$4 billion annually. About 2.8 billion trees are cut down in the world each year; the United States logs more than any other country — more than twice as much as Brazil.

This is a good tree for October, *Acer ginnala* (a'ser jin-na'la) or Amur Maple is one that colors up pretty good in the fall. It's leaf color is dark glossy green in the summer and changes to shades of yellow and red in fall. You will find the best coloration if the tree is planted in full sun.

**Leaves:** Opposite, simple, 1½ to 3" long, 3 lobed, with the middle lobe elongated than the two others. Light green underneath.

**Buds:** Small, 1/8" imbricate buds, reddish brown or lighter, glabrous.

**Size:** 15 to 18' and equal in spread. Most trees are multi-stemmed.

**Landscape Value:** Excellent small specimen to be used by the patio, screening, and massing. Very hardy and would be a good choice for an above ground container use.

**Credit:** "Manual of Woody Landscaping Plants" by Dirr

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The qualified candidate will have the ability to drive a tandem axle truck pulling a trailer and state-of-the-art spreader. An Associate's degree in agronomy or turf management is preferred. Closely related practical work experience is also preferred with golf course maintenance experience required. The technician must be able to obtain the required CDL operator's license, certification to apply pesticides and be able to lift 50 pounds. Overnight travel is required.

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