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Bull Sheet

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Bull Sheet printed by Ever-Redi Printing, 5100 East Ave., Countryside, IL 60525.

The Bull Sheet is published once a month. All articles are required by the 10th of the month to make the next issue. Advertising is sold by the column inch, by the quarter page, half page and by the full page. All artwork to be finished, camera ready or negative, screen 110 or 133, black and white only. Circulation is over 600 issues per month.

On Course With the President

Events and circumstances have made this an unusual beginning of the MAGCS year. From the combination of the NCTE being earlier than usual, and the MAGCS January meeting moved a couple of weeks to February to secure the desired speaker, it seems like a long time since the MAGCS has been active. Behind the scenes the action has much been different.



The new MAGCS Board of Directors has been taking

advantage of the winter season by laying the ground work required to accomplish various projects and goals for the "Midwest". The Education committee always has its hands full trying to provide our members with interesting topics and speakers for the many educational sessions presented throughout the year. This will not be an easy task for Don Ferreri, the 1995 MAGCS Education Chairman.

Our MAGCS Employment committee has been busy trying to develop other venues to promote the MAGCS and its membership. We want to promote this to our regions' golf clubs and to devise methods of expanding our employment services. The committee will also be restructuring procedures and presentations to aggressively pursue clubs or courses seeking superintendents. Our goal is to keep the local jobs within the "Midwest" membership. The Public Relations committee will work with the Employment committee to help develop these professionally printed reference materials promoting the MAGCS and our members.

Other immediate goals of the Membership committee is to team up and closely assist the Executive Secretary. We need to sift through the entire membership register and check for any corrections in the data base before the next directory goes to print. One area that needs particular attention is the member class category. Since the data in the computer is composed of information from the returned portion of the dues statement, many data fields have either changed, been filled out incorrectly, or left blank. During the past renewal cycle, many individuals registered a certain class on the questionnaire and returned a different dues statement and payment. At the end of the 1993-1994 term, over 100 members omitted listing a classification. It will unquestionably be a time consuming job for this committee to sort this out. Not until these discrepancies are resolved, can we proceed with the printing of the membership cards and have the membership directory revised.

Brian Bossert is Chairman of the Arrangements committee for 1995. Brian has been busy getting confirmations for the upcoming host sites for our 1995 monthly meetings. Waiting for final approval and working on costs can be challenging and tests ones patience. It is apparent that some powers in charge do not move too quickly. Once these details are final we can go to print with a conformed meeting schedule. The duplicity of a map and written directions seems to be un-

(continued page 4)

(On Course With The President continued) necessary and wasteful. The Board felt that the map was seldom used and not worth the extra cost. This year the meeting schedule and directions will be inserted into a pocket calendar provided by the "Midwest" and hopefully prove more useful as well as less costly.

These are a few of the projects currently being worked on by a hard working Board of Directors whose goal is to serve the members of the MAGCS.

One last item of mention. The attempt to generate funds by way of membership contributions is proving to be a success with about 40% registering with the contributory levels. Various members of the Board, on the other hand, have heard an occasional comment from a person who is opposed to different levels of membership. Some have a feeling that they will not be viewed as favorably or looked down upon for being a Regular member compared to a Gold or Silver card member. Obviously, the Board does not want that to happen and it is not the intention of the program to recognize the members who have had the ability to pay elevated dues as being "better" than a Regular member. We understand that many clubs or businesses cannot afford to donate, or policies will not allow them to be as charitable. Therefore, the Board is looking into a more subtle way of recognizing the different levels on the membership card. We must all understand that many companies not only pick up the cost for several members of their companies, they also contribute to the Midwest through sponsoring golf events as well which is a direct and immediate benefit to our members. I am sure these contributions do not go unnoticed, especially to the active part of our membership.

Hope to see you at Arrowhead on February 7, 1995.

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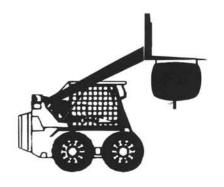
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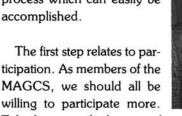
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Director's Column

by Ed Braunsky, CGCS Secretary/Treasurer

Happy New Year! 1995 has been declared the year for all to review and take inventory with regards to their involvement within the MAGCS. This is a four step process which can easily be accomplished.





Take for example the annual meeting held last November at the Medinah Country Club. What an embarrassment to have such a low number of voting members at the election. To me, non-participation at this function is a shame. Webster defines voting as "to indicate one's perference by a vote". How can one be involved if they can't take the time to show up? Please plan to participate this coming November. You will find the meeting well worth your time! Involvement at the monthly MAGCS golf outings should always be filled to capacity. Support the superintendent who busts his tail to put on a great meeting.

The next step for review is cooperation. This is a no brainer. When you receive any kind of information from the MAGCS, fill it out and send it in. Although caution must be used here. Read all of the information carefully. Many items came back to the MAGCS office with the incorrect payment. The prepayment system has worked well, but the new due's statements has not. Please double check all of your mail. This would help ease the work load for all involved.

The third step involves contribution. This step mirrors participation. Fred Opperman, the **Bull Sheet** editor, is always looking for contributions by way of articles. The many committees in the MAGCS are always looking for people to give of their time as well as their ideas.

The last step is satisfaction. How many times have you walked out on the golf course and have felt satisfied with the way the course looked? Experience this feeling all over again by participating, cooperating, and contributing to our association. This associations runs as well as the members want it to. If you are not satisfied, call one of the board members. Let them know your thoughts. Changes and additions can always be made. Make 1995 the year that you really put forth an effort to make the MAGCS the best association it can be.



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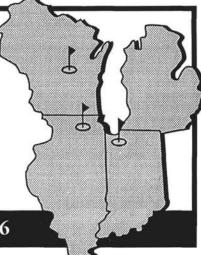
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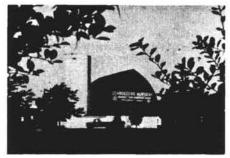
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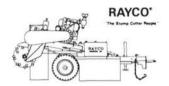
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Enhancing the Perception and Status of the Golf Course Superintendent

by Jim Anderson

I am a member at Sunset Ridge Country Club in Northbrook, Illinois. When I was originally asked to provide a club member's point-of-view on those things that would enhance the perception and status of the golf course superintendent, I immediately wondered if my opinions were of any consequence. Upon reflection, however, I came to realize that we play an important part in your daily equation. Although perhaps a necessary evil, it is probably well that you, at least, address the issue of how the members view your profession.

As I began to put my thoughts together for this presentation, I was reminded of an article I wrote years ago for the **Bull Sheet**, which is the newsletter for the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. At the time, I was chairman of my club's Grounds and Green Committee and I think the opening paragraph of that article nicely sums up the issue of perception and status. Let me read that paragraph to you:

"Thirty years ago, the course I played on was absolutely state-of-the-art in terms of maintenance. It was held up as a shining example of what was great about Chicagoland golf courses". I still play that same golf course and if you transplanted those conditions of 30 years ago to our course today, you would have a membership revolt. The curious thing about this fact is that mot of the members don't know it. To them, the golf course has always been the same. Fairways have always been lush, lined by mature trees proving wonderful lines of sight, to lightning fast greens, which held even that 2 iron that never got more than 3 feet off the ground.

"Thirty years ago, the course I played on was absolutely state-of-the-art in terms of maintenance. It was held up as a shining example of what was great about Chicagoland golf courses". I still play that same golf course and if you transplanted those conditions of 30 years ago to our course today you would have a membership revolt.

"How does it happen that a golf course can be transformed, literally before the eyes of the people that play it with no upheaval and no major watershed event to demand such change? Therein lies the golf course superintendent's art, because these things don't just happen. They are planned, committed to, sold to the membership and executed."

What the above describes is exactly what happened at Sunset Ridge Country Club over a period of 30 years and my point to you is that if the members aren't aware it's happening, then it's a certainty that no one is getting credit for carrying it out. How then, does one improve the perception, and as a result the status of the golf course superintendent?

Start by becoming visible. It's not longer possible for a golf course superintendent to simply adopt the attitude which says, "Leave me alone and let me do my job." You must be willing to become visible around your golf course. You are a significant part of golf course management and managers must be in evidence.

Secondly, you must provide leadership to your Grounds and Green Chairman, as well as your Grounds and Green Commitee. Not only does your chairman and his committee men need leadership, they want it. These are a group of amateurs dealing out of their element. They are looking for guidance, but rest assured if they don't receive it, they will step into the void and do things about which you will often disagree. At Sunset Ridge Country Club, we have had a long range Grounds and Green Committee for over 30 years. It is comprised of all former Grounds and Green Chairmen, as well as the head golf professional and the grounds and green superintendent. It is an experienced and distinguished group. Even given its longevity, however, we constantly look to our superintendent to tell us what to do. The more our superintendent gives his professional advice, the better we are.

Manage in fact as well as in deeds. If you find yourself standing around with a shovel or rake in hand, you are not giving your golf course the best utilization of your time and education. You have all spent years learning highly sophisticated processes and management skills. If you are personally solving one crisis, which others on your staff could handle, you are virtually assured that there are 3 others presently going untended on your golf course. As it relates to status: dress, act and office like a professional. If you office in "the barn" and dress like you are ready to get the crops out of the field, then unfortunately that is probably how you will be treated. This fact of life, by the way, is not unique to your profession. I've always told young sales people who work for me that they should not dress for their current job, but rather for the one they want. It's important for people to be able to visualize you as handling the next level of responsibility.

Perhaps the single most important aspect of enhancing your perception and status involves the area of communication. You have to communicate both on a narrow focus to the Board of Directors and a broad basis to the membership as a whole. As it relates to the board, you should make periodic appearances before them. If they don't ask you, then ask them. I can't imagine a Board of Directors of a golf course in America that would not like to hear from its golf course superintendent on the subject they hold most dear to their hearts. Tell them about your budget, your plans and your problems. If you don't appear before them, you are by default, counting on your Green Chairman to do your communication for you. Some Green Chairmen are going to be good at this and others are going to be not so good. Don't leave your destiny in the hands of someone else. Concerning the membership as a whole, communicate them in writing and communicate several times a year. Somewhere out there is the next Board of Directors, the next group of officers, and your next Grounds and Green Chairman. Start making them aware now of your skills and your job responsibilities. Convey the following kinds of things:

- Discuss with them the issue of playability versus aesthetics, hard versus soft, brown versus green, fast versus smooth.
- 2. Talk to them about your maintenance programs, what, when, where and why. Parenthetically, what comes first at your golf course, the maintenance schedule or the tournament schedule?

(continued page 10)

(Jim Anderson continued)

- 3. Communicate your philosophy. Point out what has been accomplished over a period of time. This should be living proof of your philosophy.
- 4. Talk to your membership and your board about golf course integrity issues. We are all amateur golf course architects. Someone has to hold the line at each golf course against the ravages of a succession of Greens' Chairmen pet projects. In Chicagoland, we are blessed with enumerable, wonderful parkland golf courses. They are hallmarked by wonderful grass, impeccable manicuring, mature trees and flat sweeping terrain. These golf courses have a heritage and a tradition and should not become quasi-TPC golf courses. Give your golf course direction in this area.

Finally, deal with change, It's like become visible. It's part of the reality of your job. Accommodate change and embrace it, but as mentioned above as it relates to golf course architecture, don't lose your perspective. We pay for your ability to look back, as well as your ability to look forward. It's part of what makes you a pro. I might mention by the way, that all of these things have nothing to do with job security, but rather have lots to do with job satisfaction. If you communicate and tell your membership why you want to do various things, you will be allowed to get done what you want to get done.

In reviewing these comments, I realize there is not much startling information being conveyed. In simple review:

- 1. Become visible.
- 2. Be prepared to be the leader of your Grounds and Green Committee.
 - 3. Be a manager not just a doer.
 - 4. Communicate on both a narrow and a broad basis.
 - Accommodate change.

At Sunset Ridge Country Club, we are the grateful recipient of an astounding 63 years of consecutive stewardship of our golf course, residing in 2 individuals. Dennis Wilson, our present superintendent, and his uncle, Domenic Grotti, collectively have spent 75 years tending our grounds. As a member, I get the clear advantage of their contribution to our golf course. As it relates to this discussion, it gives me the perspective of what can be accomplished if the golf course superintendent is a strong and assertive part of a golf courses' management team.

Editor's Note: Jim Anderson gave this as a speech in the fall of 1992 at the ITF meeting.



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