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# the Bull Sheet

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## On Course With the President

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all, and may we all keep our employers happy in 1995.



Recently while mingling with other superintendents at professional gatherings on the trade show floor, or during a seminar break, a common conversational question was "did you have a good year?" The responses and thoughts I have heard have been typical end of the year comments. Most of the superintendents had an acceptable year turf-wise and are comfortable with their status at the end of the season. A common area of difficulty and frustration this year, however, has been the problems encountered in dealing with and trying to please the clientele for whom they work. Why is this so often a problem? How many times have we heard that reasons for a termination had nothing to do with course conditions or job performance, but rather are related to public relations difficulties?

We must constantly and consistently be selling ourselves, our management programs, and the importance of our management expertise and professionalism to our employers. Our image must project professionalism and therefore a valuable necessity to our employers.

The Golf Professionals have done a great deal with enhancing their image and promoting their worthiness towards convincing clubs of the importance of employing qualified PGA professionals. They aggressively go to clubs which are seeking employment assistance. They have an agenda, they provide professionally prepared reference materials, and they sell themselves and their organization as a professional commodity necessary for a successful working relationship. On the other hand, when a Superintendent position opens and we try to do the same, many times clubs will not even consider the benefit of meeting with our representatives. The most we are able to do is provide MAGCS mailing labels, and only if we are persistent. Generally, our profession is not viewed to be in the same class, or taken as seriously as other management groups.

Over the years the Superintendent image has improved, but progress in this area has not reached the proper level. We have discussed this topic at meetings and have listened to speakers lecture about how a thoughtful personal image is an important step in being recognized a professional. We know that dressing the part is extremely important, particularly for first impressions. We made a great deal of advancement by moving into a coat and tie type of dress for our conferences and meetings, but there is still a large enough percentage that still insist on wearing jeans, work boots, and hats indoors. Some have exhibited bad table manners or a lack of courtesy towards guest speakers which reflects negatively towards Golf Course Superintendents as a whole. No-

(continued page 4)

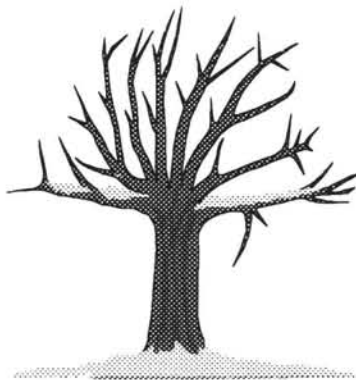
(On Course With The President continued)

body really wants to say anything to an individual for fear of hurting feelings or sounding snobbish, but it doesn't take much effort to play the part. Professionally dressing and conducting ourselves for the image we *want* is an important step.

The GCSAA has been working hard to enhance its member image and the educated expertise of the Superintendent. The MAGCS will be looking into developing new methods of promoting the MAGCS image and its members. Bob Maibusch is Chairman of the Public Relations Committee and he brings a new enthusiasm for these MAGCS Public Relations goals. The efforts of the committee will be of benefit to all, but it will require a group effort to be meaningful. In closing we have been told to act and dress for the position and respect we desire. In so far as new goals, we must not let the fear of failure keep us from trying. If we believe we can or we can't, we are right.

Wishing you the best for 1995.

Joel Purpur, President MAGCS



## Ode To An Oak

Oh, mighty Quercus out there in the snow,  
How do you handle this 20 below?  
Standing out there on the edge of the glen,  
Seeing harsh winters again and again.  
You've stood in that clearing for quite a few years,  
I guess you looked down on the first pioneers.  
Oh, giant oak of such silence and grace,  
How many years have you stood in this place?

I see you in awe. It's beyond my belief  
All the wonderful things that you do with a leaf,  
And the foliage you sport ... 80 feet in the air ...  
How do you get all the water up there?  
Even the scientists don't seem to know  
Just how you manage to live and to grow.  
I've read many theories. They're more than just thin.  
You keep your secrets well, you and your kin.

We humans are clever, we're clever indeed,  
We've walked on the moon and we've outdistanced speed.  
We've got our computers, those marvelous things;  
Missiles that hurdle past Jupiter's rings;  
And one little bomb that will level a mile.  
Oh, yes, stately oak, if you could, you would smile.  
For all our inventiveness, as of this date  
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## Director's Column

by Donald A. Cross, CGCS  
Vice President MAGCS

I hope all of you had a very Merry Christmas and enjoyed bringing in the New Year. It's hard to believe another year has past. During the "thick of the season" it seems like time stands still, but looking back it seems to have flashed by. All the reason one should be sure to spend some quality time with family and friends during these next few slower paced months.

I want to sincerely thank you for your confidence in allowing me to serve as Vice President. It is an honor to serve our association as we continue to progress into a major presence in the golf and golf course management industry. The entire Board of Directors take their positions very seriously and will continue to service to bring quality programs and services to our membership. The MAGCS has made significant strides in the sixteen years that I have been a member, but we clearly have much work to do if we are to maintain, and strengthen, our stature. We cannot, however, expect improvements in programs and services, enhance areas such as public relations, our magazine, and philanthropic endeavors, and expand membership benefits, without also understanding that these agenda will require appropriate funding.

As Secretary/Treasurer last year, entrusted with managing the financial affairs of our association, I quickly learned that there are more extensive expenses involved in operating our association than one may imagine. The expenses such as publication of our newsletter, monthly meetings, the hospitality suite, and compensation of our contractors is readily apparent. These are our major cost categories but overall they account for only 60% of our expense budget. The remaining 40% is in the less obvious areas such as printing of meeting notices, dues statements, and the directory; postage and mailing costs; office and computer supplies and phone service; golf prizes, speaker expenses, and awards and host gifts; board and committee expenses; research and benevolent contributions; and others. As you can see the list of expenses is lengthy and as in most businesses (our's being no exception), expenses continue to increase. As the MAGCS evolves, further categories will likely be added and overall expenses will increase. I mention this information not to incite concern of financial despair but only to provide you a better understanding of our expense concerns. In fact, our association's fiscal status is excellent. We have in reserve, funds in the amount of approximately 40% of our annual budget. This reserve, according to our accountant, is close to the level that an association of our scope should maintain and will now allow us to consider new ventures.

Thanks to the efforts of many whom have led and directed the MAGCS in the past, the current Board of Directors, and an understanding and supportive membership we, the MAGCS, are poised to continue, and further promote, our position as a prominent association.



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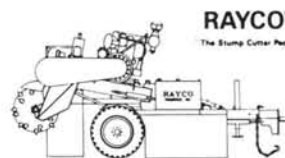
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# Goose Tactics Tried and Untrue

by Tony Rzadzki, CGCS  
Cantigny Golf

After attending the C.A.G.C.S. Forum recently and listening to almost every speaker complaining about our feathered friends, I decided that now is the time to relate my experiences and opinions about goose control. You and I deal with this problem daily, and as yet, no one has come up with a solution. To be honest with you neither have I, but I am constantly experimenting with different methods to rid of this scourge ... the resident Canada goose.

The following is a list of all of the methods that I know of that have been used to chase, scare, or eliminate the goose from our properties. The list reads in order of least effective to most effective. This is my opinion and I am sure may cause a stir amongst us, but here goes.

## 1. Yelling, waving and flailing arms, throwing rocks.

Result: You look like a maniac or may be perceived as a superintendent that has been spraying chemicals just a little too long.

## 2. Swinging golf clubs or chasing geese with your golf cart and swinging a club at them.

Result: A nesting goose might bite you in the butt, once again you'll be perceived as a maniac, and the geese get used to your behavior and crap even harder before they honk (laugh) and scoot 5 feet out of the way only to dump again on another spot.

## 3. Installing plastic alligators/swans.

Result: The perception is lost — you are a maniac that definitely needs help. Plastic or foam animals placed in ponds don't last long. The geese quickly destroy them while playing their version of johnnie cross tackle with them. If you ever get on I-88 east bound off of the Route 59 ramp you will see a deflated alligator in the corner of the pond. The geese now use him as a diving platform for their Olympic games.

Live swans, from personal experience, do nothing to frighten or chase geese off of a pond. Yes, they are beautiful birds and they may aesthetically enhance a lake, but they dump as much as a goose, they need extra veterinary care, and they need to be fed, which attracts other wading birds ... which attracts more geese.

If I could develop a hybrid gator that could survive our winters and could be trained not to eat junior golfers or small adults I might be on to something.

## 4. Flags, tape, and owl balloons.

Result: Too psychedelic. If you watch them too long you won't need to spray your turf to alter your mood.

## 5. Greenscovers.

Result: Finally something that is very effective in deterring geese on putting surfaces. It's too bad that we can't leave them out year round. But to those who can afford them in the winter time they work great.

## 6. Pond Aerator (just a reminder: shut them off)

Result: If you have bubble aerators on your course, it's great to keep your stagnant areas moving even in the winter time. But our feathered friends love open water and they will add their own fertilizer in that open hole in the ice as they play their version of ice hockey on your pond.

## 7. Irrigation control.

Result: Quite effective at scaring geese off of a particular area of your course. I have yet to be lucky enough to have a sprinkler head pointy directly at a goose when I turn my heads on. I would really like to get lucky and have one sitting on a head when I detonate. Maybe I would literally scare the -hit out of him and he would die on the spot.

My usual result with the irrigation control is that the geese take off, circle around, then land on the next green just as a player is trying to can a 60 footer. Then I have to go over, apologize, and launch them again. Hopefully they'll leave or land in a lake this time.

All joking aside, this is a pretty good harassment tactic. It's too bad we can't leave our irrigation systems charged year round, it could be very effective at this time of the year.

## 8. Bombs and Rockets

Result: I personally have not used this tactic, but I have talked to others who have. Once (if you can) you gain permission from your neighbors to use these devices, I have heard that they can be very effective ... if you are persistent and use them before play begins. One problem I imagined is that during the day when geese often flock in, I wouldn't want to be bombing geese, especially when that same player is in the backstroke of that 60 footer that he's sure to sink.

## 9. Goose grid

Result: They work. I have personally seen them and last week a couple of the speakers at the Forum showed some different methods of installation to protect various wetland management crops until they are large enough to withstand a feeding frenzy from the honkers.

I understand that the goose grid is a temporary guard installed for the protection of wetland crops until they mature, but during that time they look quite unpleasant, especially when the water level goes down on a wetland and the algae hangs off of the strings. It takes a silver-tongued superintendent to explain the benefits of this ugly situation to his committee and that it will remain that way for a few years.

## 10. Buffer zones around lakes

Result: According to many wildlife biologists, including The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, this is one of the best ways to keep geese on the water and prevent them from walking out on to the turf. I have yet to hear of anyone having any positive results from this management practice. If any of you have, please call me.

I believe that the theory is great, but to put it into practice is rather difficult on a golf course. Most of our club's committees demand that 'clean cut look' on lake banks. Once again to convince them that this method will work is very difficult especially when they pose this question, "can't the goose just fly onto our turf?" Duhhh!

I was able to persuade upper management here not to mow our lake banks this past season, one positive point is that it reduces labor costs and time. Next season I hope to extend the buffer zone further up the bank, then I will be able to see for myself if this management practice really reduces goose fertilization on my fairways.

(continued page 10)



(Goose Tactics continued)

11. Grape juice

Result: The jury is still out and the scientists, I am sure, are feverishly working to discover if this will work. Millions of dollars are at stake. They could test it here if they like. If it fails I'll just add some ice cubes and have a cold drink.

12. Eggs. Removal/spraying/shaking

Result: Removal and/or spraying with some sort of oil based product are very effective, but ... very illegal! \$500 per egg if you are caught molesting a federally protected bird. I would not suggest either one of these methods. If anyone of us were caught Paul Harvey and the environmentalists would light the powder keg to the already unstable, volatile situation that exists.

Egg shaking is legal. We were able to obtain a permit from the Department of the Interior; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This method is very effective with one caution; timing. The egg needs to be shook at the proper time of development within. You need to place the egg in a bucket of water. When the egg reaches a certain stage of development it floats in a certain manner depending on it's age. When the egg reaches the proper age shake it vigorously and be sure to replace it in the nest. Mother goose will continue to sit on them and her nesting urge will be satisfied.

I was not aware of the proper timing for shaking eggs this past spring, so some birds did hatch. Next season I will be sure to float test each nest and shake the eggs at the proper time. The phone number for permit application is 612/725-3775. The office is located in St. Paul, Minnesota and call between 7:30 and 3:00.

13. Remington's cure

Result: Very effective. A 12 gauge shotgun can solve many problems and create many as well. I don't believe that the 'nuisance season' for removing geese is available in Illinois at this time. I didn't give it much regard since we did not want to start any problems with our neighbors. I am sure that many of you would share this same concern.

14. T.R.'s cure

Result: Very satisfying and somewhat effective.

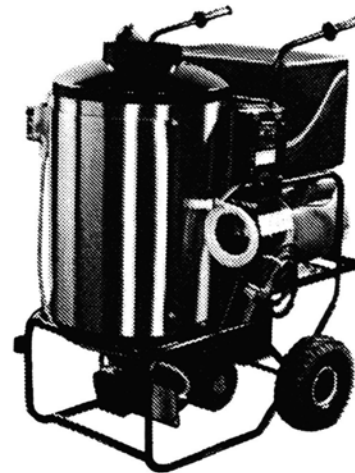


No, I have not yet discovered a cure to eliminate resident geese on golf courses, but I am actively working on a couple of ideas. But I do use one more tool that some of you already have, and I would like to narrate some of my experiences with this, my most valuable tool, my dogs.

Nothing works better than a well trained dog in chasing geese off of a golf course, nothing!

Make sure that you read the key words in that past sentence 'well trained'. You need a dog that will: a) ride on a golf cart, b) sit still when approaching golfers, c) not bark around golfers, d) sit quietly on a cart or leash if you need to talk to someone, check a green, or go in the clubhouse for a cup of coffee. You need a dog that will mind your commands when she is working (chasing geese) and a dog that is determined to get the job done. (continued page 12)

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