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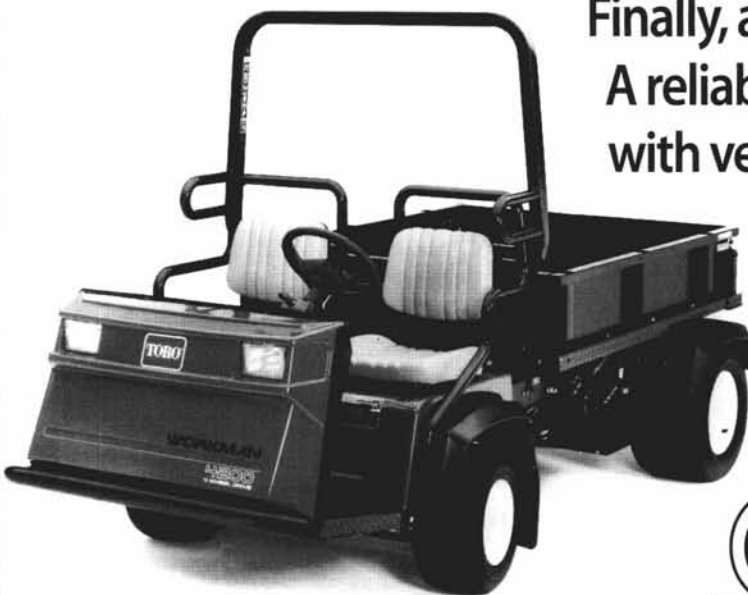
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EDITOR: **Fred D. Opperman**
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Arrowhead Golf Club, Wheaton, Illinois

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We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

The MAGCS (Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents) member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.

On Course with the President



Don Cross,
President, MAGCS

As this issue of *On Course* crosses your desk, many of us will be in Orlando or will soon be traveling there to partake in, what can certainly be considered a highlight of our year, the GCSAA International Conference and Show. Varied choices of opportunity for education, equipment and product inspection, camaraderie, entertainment, and relaxation will be available for all. I hope many of you are able to attend and have the opportunity to have your families join you for at least the "relaxation" part. It might be a nice way to make up for our certain "intolerable" demeanor during the past golf season. I hope we all return invigorated and poised to begin a new golf season!

While many of our members use the current "slow season" to enjoy some needed and deserved, rest and recharge time, your MAGCS Board has been diligently attending to the various affairs and business of the association. Many plans for the new year have already been formulated and/or finalized at two Board of Director's meetings and at several standing committee meetings. A myriad of activity proceeds behind the scenes.

At this writing, the New Year has just arrived and our Vice President, Ed Braunsky, is finalizing the year end financial statement, which will show we ended up the year on solid ground with a slight income. The MAGCS prepares a break-even budget each year (as we have for 1996), and some years we fall short, other years we slightly profit. Overall, over the past several years, our year end financial condition has been very close to what was projected. Hopefully, we will see the same trend with this year's finances. Our slight income in 1995 was due to a strong support of the gold/silver contribution program as well as unexpected monthly meeting sponsorships. I applaud all those who are responsible and thank one and all. Ed recently "passed the books," along with the load of responsibility and effort in keeping them in order, to Kevin Czerkies. Kevin stands ready, willing, and able to keep us on track. The Secretary / Treasurer position was the most time-consuming task of any I have experienced while on the MAGCS board, and Ed would readily agree. We owe Ed our sincere thanks for a job extremely well done!

Committee progress is steadily proceeding. The Public Relations committee is finalizing details for the Golf Show exhibit. The Membership committee is assisting Executive Secretary, George Minnis, in developing the 1996 membership roster and new directory inserts. Education, Arrangements, and Golf are all formulating their plans and events for the remainder of

the year. The Editorial committee is hard at work with *On Course* production, procuring advertisers, and out "twisting a few arms" in attempt to acquire more article submission. Finally, the Past Presidents Council will be meeting in early January, the details of which will be reported in the next issue of *On Course*.

Lastly, I want to thank the many contributors to the Golden Tee Club, for their support of the MAGCS Hospitality Suite in Orlando. The contributions this year parallel previous years and allow us to provide the means for our members to enjoy a respite from the brisk pace during conference days. Thank You for your generosity!!!

Donald A. Cross, CGCS
President, MAGCS

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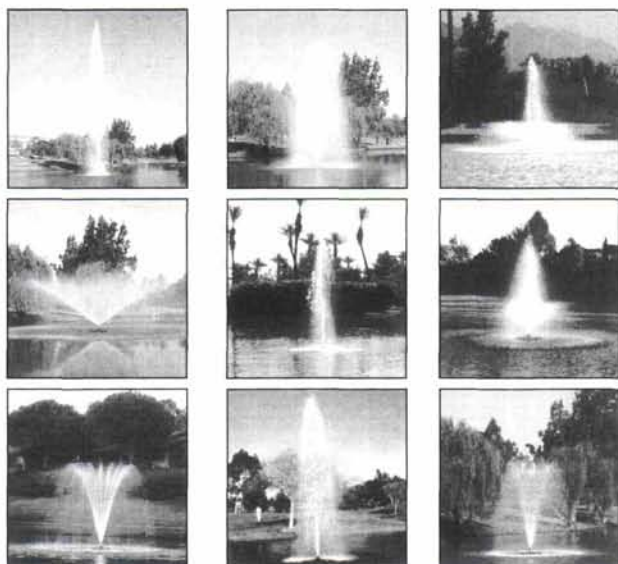
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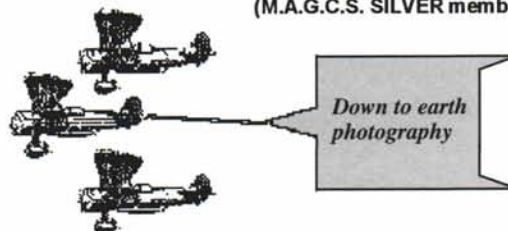
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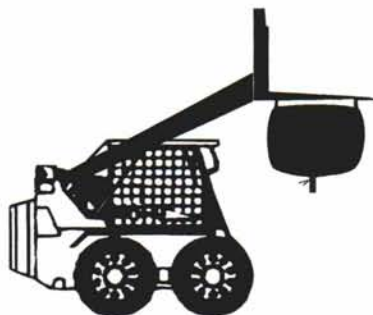
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A Fireside Chat with Bruce Williams (Fire Not Included)

By John Gurke and Dave Blomquist

Upon entering the Office of Bruce Williams, superintendent of the Bob O'Link Golf Club and next President of the GCSAA, it is plain to see that this is a busy man. Shelves and tables are crowded with computers, fax machines, copiers, and the like. His desk is piled high with correspondence. Looking behind one of these stacks, we find Bruce waving us in while finishing a phone call. The purpose for our visit: To find out more about our next GCSAA president—his motivations, his goals, and the issues he plans to tackle during his term. This is not going to be like pulling teeth, as those of us who know Bruce also know that he is more than willing to talk to anyone who'll listen about our profession.

We asked Bruce about his beginnings in the industry, which of course centered around his father, the legendary Bob Williams (who was, ironically, President of both MAGCS and GCSAA during his celebrated career). Bruce not only worked under his father, but several other notable superintendents and pros like Bruce Sering and Hubby Habjan before deciding upon a career in golf course maintenance. He took over Bob O'Link in 1979 when Bob retired after twenty years. For the past sixteen years he has had the pleasure of working with Rick Bowden, his assistant and right hand. Asked if Rick's presence has facilitated his long-term commitment to our associations, and we get a resounding YES. But it doesn't end there, says Bruce. For this pursuit to be successful, he is quick to point out that all facets of



Bruce Williams, CGCS

his life have Supported him: His staff, his club members, his peers, and, most importantly, his family. His involvement with the GCSAA is a 7 to 9-year stint, with many days away from home and work. The year of his impending Presidency alone will require him to be away from 60 to 90 days, including ten or more during our peak season!

Why would anyone want to bring this on themselves? Bruce's answer is simple: He has a genuine desire to improve our profession. How he can do this is answered when we ask his "Mission" as our next president. Bruce's initial reaction is "to continue to look forward and to leave it better than I found it." He continues on to explain the three mandates he will address as president: Image, Environment, and Chapter Relations. With the first two we have been very successful over the past few years, says Bruce. Our PR programs such as "Par For The Course" and the one-minute spots during televised golf tournaments, among others, are evidence of this. But Bruce would like to expand on this to the point

of making GCSAA a "brand name"—a name as recognizable as, say, PGA. Akin to image enhancement is somewhat of a "sub-mandate" focusing an career development.

Bruce explains that with club budgets becoming tighter and fiscal prudence more important than ever, the need for us to expand our professional capabilities is paramount. Management companies and upper management streamlining will favor the individual who has a more all-encompassing background not only in turf maintenance, but in financial management, marketing, and facility management.

The chief area Bruce has been and will be attending to is Chapter Relations. The GCSAA has had an affiliation agreement of one type or another since the thirties. As he sees it, the need for an upgraded affiliation agreement is key. The goal is for all chapter members (A and B classes) to be GCSAA members eventually. At the present time, many chapters have a less than 50% membership rate, but these chapters receive all the benefits an affiliated chapter receives. The GCSAA programs offered to chapters cost money, and many superintendents are reaping the rewards of these programs without belonging to the Association. This, in Bruce's opinion, is an issue which must be addressed. He hopes that by the year 2000 the GCSAA increases its membership from the current 15,000 to 20,000, with a 10 to 15% increase in the current 8,200 A and B membership. Our Association is growing rapidly, and to ensure its future success we need the support and involvement

(continued on page 22)

Urbanization Affects Tree Longevity

By James A. Fizzell*

We have suffered significant losses of trees throughout Chicagoland the last few years. Some of these were big, old trees; but some were not.

Planting a tree is usually considered an exercise for the benefit of future generations. We plant for posterity, expecting trees to outlive us, and to be enjoyed by our kids and their kids. In an urban setting, some sites will allow a tree to live a long life, others may severely limit longevity. In fact, analysis of the site will provide us with a relatively good measure of how long we can expect a tree will last in a particular spot. Other factors may contribute as well.

Some of the trees that have expired of late went prematurely because of their situations. Their demise should have been anticipated and expected.

There are at least a dozen good reasons why urban trees have finite, predictable life spans. These include urban intensity, the planting site and soil volume, the kind of soil and what's under it, amount of light, wind, pollution, pests and diseases, mechanical damage, the species, and the care or treatment the tree receives.

Urban intensity has a major impact on the life span of a tree. According to a study by the Urban Forest Forum, the average life of species commonly grown as shade trees is about 150 years in rural areas. In the best city sites this is reduced to about 60 years. The over-all average life span of city trees, is about 32 years; and in downtown locations this is reduced to something like 6 or 7

years. Usually, some of the above factors combine to cause this phenomenon.

The planting site and the volume of soil available to the roots have major impact on the longevity of the trees. A 25 inch tree requires at least 1200 cubic feet of soil. At a depth of 3 feet, this means an unobstructed area of at least 20 by 20 feet. Only large yards, parks and golf courses in urban locations have such open expanses. Our common species of shade trees will reach a 25 inch caliper at an age of somewhere between 26 and 40 years. At that age, the 1200 cubic feet of soil volume essentially are filled with roots, and the tree has become root-bound. Decline sets in.

More common in the city are areas of about 10 by 10 feet, or 300 cubic feet of soil. 300 cubic feet of soil will support a 12 to 15 inch tree to an age of 15 to 25 years. Tree lawns or parkways between the curb and walk are often 8 feet by 4 feet or 96 cubic feet in volume. These will support

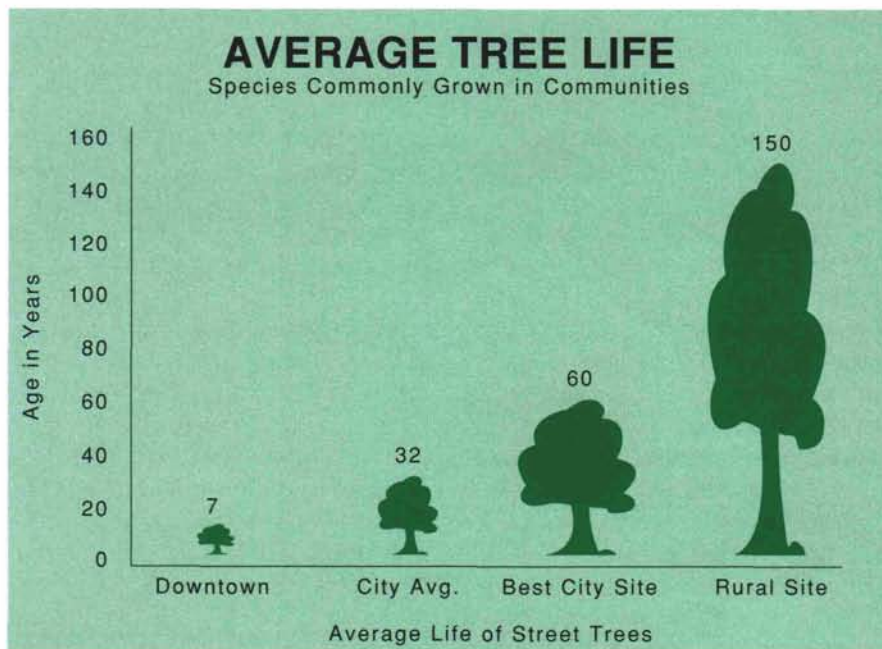
trees to a size of 8 to 10 inches and an age of 10 to 15 years.

Tree pits common in inner-city locations are often no more than 4 feet by 4 feet and contain 48 cubic feet of soil. These are containers which will support a 3 to 6 inch tree to an age of about 10 years. Roots of a 4-inch tree planted in a pit of this size will fill it in about 3 years.

Trees planted in 36-inch tubs will survive up to 3 or 5 years and will reach a size of 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 or 3 inches. Plants set into inhospitable soils into which roots cannot grow, or plants grown in soils vastly different than those into which they are planted are likewise affected. These plants are in what are commonly referred to as contained soils and behave as though they were in pots or tubs. They are forced to grow in the soil contained in the ball.

Additional adverse conditions may reduce the lives of trees in cramped quarters even

(continued on page 22)



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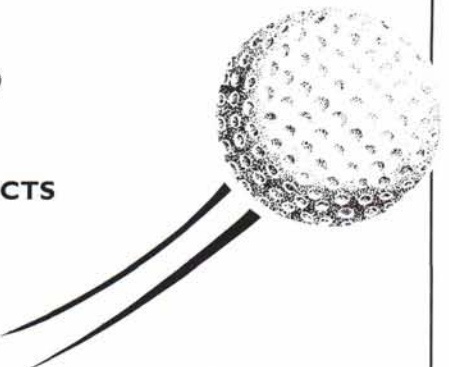
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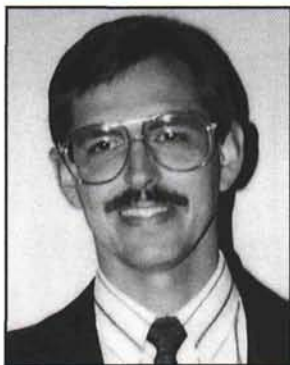
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Director's Column



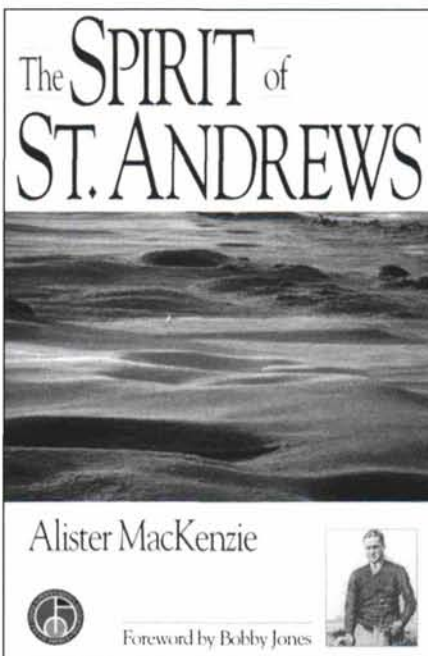
Bob Maibusch
CGCS, MGC

BOOK IT!

I recently finished reading a book that caused me to reflect on the business that we conduct and how self serving influences have negatively impacted the great game of golf. The book is Alister MacKenzie's *The Spirit of St. Andrews*. While we have time for reflection and renewal this winter, I would recommend it to anyone.

I must confess that it sat on my shelf unopened for several months until the club's chairman of grounds brought it to my attention as a book that he was reading. Shortly after that, I picked it up and I couldn't put it down. Although it was written in 1934 and wasn't published until this year, it contains such a wealth of information pertinent to modern day golf courses that I think it should be required reading for every person who ever finds themselves in the position of voting on or dictating changes in course features or maintenance. My grounds chairman shared this same sentiment strongly enough that he purchased copies of the book for every member of the golf course planning committee and asked them to read it before they cast a vote on future changes to the golf course.

In the book, MacKenzie talks with reverence about St. Andrews as the ultimate achievement (divine intervention?) in golf course architectural strategy. He dwells on the importance of what he calls the "line of charm," which is the direction that the architect has designed for you to play the hole, versus the "line of instinct," which is the direct route to the hole.



He also talks about minimalist design and the problem of the overuse of bunkers. One of his most interesting observations is that his measure of a good or great golf course is not one that you enjoy the first time you play it. In fact, he felt that if you didn't like one of his golf courses the first time around that it was probably a good sign, but that you would come to appreciate it after four or five times around.

MacKenzie devotes an entire chapter to Greenkeeping, and it is fascinating reading. So much of what he believes in architecture also applies to the maintenance of

the golf course. He took an attitude of minimalist maintenance, bemoaning the overuse of fertilizers and the overgrooming of turf. In fact, he relates a story of how an overmanicured golf course takes away from the charm of the game because if you never have a bad lie, you cannot appreciate a good one. I couldn't agree more. I have long felt that we have overmanicured our golf courses to their detriment, to the point where even hazards, such as bunkers, are supposed to produce perfect lies every time. He talks with affection for the differing shades of green on the unfertilized fairways of some of his favorite courses. I have been lucky to work at a club that has an old, established golf course that over the years has produced this same effect. I think it is beautiful, much more so than the monotonous display of color that I am treated to on many of the resort courses that I have played.

I am not immune to pressures to make the golf course fit someone else's ideal. I do believe that we must give our members/patrons what they expect, within reason. But, I also agree with MacKenzie's observation that "Too many cooks spoil the broth," and that the individuality of the greenkeeper (superintendent) should be encouraged and not interfered with. I have succumbed to the pressures of increasing green speeds when I knew it wasn't in the best interest of the golf course. We all spend a lot of time pondering our shortcomings, and I guess the bottom line question is, "Am I giving my club's membership what they're paying for?" Boy, I sure hope so. I wouldn't give up so much of my life to the pursuit of these goals if I didn't think they were worthwhile. ■