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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents is a professional organization founded in 1927 whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance.

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.





Don Cross  
President, MAGCS

Where has the season gone? It seems as though it was just a few weeks ago that summer golfing and turf conditions were up to the levels that we, in the Chicagoland area, have come to expect. Perhaps I feel this way because it's true. Between the frigid winter, the saturated spring, and the flooded (at least for some) and unseasonably mild summer (no complaints about the latter!!), it's no wonder it seems like the "season" just started. Perhaps we will have a nice long Indian Summer to accomplish our fall maintenance work and special projects. I sure hope so!

At the August MAGCS meeting, we paid tribute to our senior members by holding Seniors' Day and the Senior championship. As this is written in advance of the event, I cannot state who the winner was, but a hearty congratulations is in order, nevertheless. I want to thank all of the seniors in attendance and those unable to attend for everything you have done for our association and our profession as well. While we acknowledge you at only this one meeting each year, your leadership, expertise, and counsel is sought and respected throughout the year. Thank you so much!!

As we approach autumn and work to finalize MAGCS events for the remainder of the year, the Midwest Clinic and the Annual Meeting come to mind. The Education Committee is formulating plans for the day's topics, and the Arrangements Committee is busy with details regarding the menu. Soon the Nominating Committee will be developing the slate of candidates for the 1996-1997 election. If any eligible members are interested in serving on the board, please let me or

Nominating Committee chairman, Joel Purpur, know as soon as possible. We are always interested in new ideas and energetic individuals to carry on the fine "Midwest" tradition. Give it some consideration.

This month's MAGCS meeting will be held at Skokie Country Club, and our MAGCS Champion will be determined. I wish all competitors "Good Luck." I'm looking forward to hosting the event and am hoping for great weather. In July Skokie Country Club's Board of Directors decided to evaluate a "spike-free" policy for the month. The results were incredible, and the membership has been elated with the putting quality difference. At the conclusion of the evaluation period, there was no question as to what policy would follow; and we are now continuously "spike-free." I mention this so that those of you planning on playing can have your spikes changed before you come. I do not think this should pose any hardship for anyone, as most of us have already joined the revolution. Judging by what I've seen and heard from other superintendents at "spike-free" clubs, it is only a matter of time before all courses will follow this program.

See you on September 16, and play well!!

Donald A. Cross, CGCS  
President, MAGCS





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# Don Cross -N- Skokie Country Club



*Dave Blomquist, Naperville C.C.*

Our MAGCS championship will be played at one of the area's best when we visit Skokie Country Club in September. Skokie C.C. will be celebrating their centennial anniversary next season and is a club rich in tradition. A Donald Ross design, in 1922 Gene Sarazan won the US Open there; and they also hosted an early Western Open. From the back tees, it plays over 6,900 yards long; and the greens roll a consistent 10+ foot on the stimpmeter, so the 1996 MAGCS champ will earn the title.

While interviewing our current MAGCS president for this profile, it occurred to me very early on that Don has been a very busy man! When he assumed the golf course superintendent position at Skokie C.C. six years ago, he knew he had a lot of work ahead of him. A casual review of the list of achievements to date will surely make any normal-thinking, spare-time-loving, sore-back-hating human being absolutely cringe. This is but a short list of achievements while at Skokie:

- Rebuilt four greens
- Leveled tees
- Installed irrigation system on greens
- Rebuilt bunkers
- Installed double-row irrigation system on fairways
- Began Audubon certification
- Installed 25 birdhouses
- Relandscaped clubhouse
- Dredged and rebuilt pond edge (see photo)

All these were accomplished while serving on the Board of

Directors of the MAGCS and spending as much time as possible with his wife and two children!

This past year has been particularly challenging not only because of the severe weather, but the aforementioned pond project



*Construction on the 3rd hole pond.*

was a major undertaking. The 3rd hole is a great par 3 with a pond that serves as a detention area for storm runoff. Sediment buildup cuts the water depth to as little as two feet in some areas. Engineering studies called for removal of three feet of silt; however, more than six feet ended up being removed. A steel retaining wall was eliminated, and the edges were regraded to blend into the pond. Where it wasn't possible to blend the edges into the water because of the severe grade, Lannon stone outcropping was placed. He is still putting the finishing touches on the project, but this is a review of what was done:

**Subcontractors:** Removed more than 30,000 yards of fill, dug a 40-foot deep hole to bury the silt from the pond, and con-

structed berms on most of the southern portion of the course.

**In-house:** Cut out the steel wall with a cutting torch and placed 675 tons of Lannon stone with a backhoe while keeping pumps running all winter to prevent the pond from refilling with water; restored drainage, cart paths, and irrigation lines; transplanted trees and irrigated the

berms, which ate up over 20,000 yards of sod.

Today, the pond is as deep as 12 feet; and although the water is still dirty from all the work, when everything settles, it will be clear and weed-free.

Don regrets not being able to go on his annual ski trip last winter as he was busy keeping the gas tanks full on the water pumps. He does, however, plan on returning to the slopes in a big way this year. He would also like to be able to devote more time to the business of running one of the largest superintendent associations in the country; but make no mistake, in his tenure on the Board and at Skokie C.C., much has been accomplished. ■

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# WHY?

Luke Strojny, CGCS  
Popular Creek G.C.

One morning, while working at St. Andrews Golf Club back in 1973, I was having breakfast with John Lapp. I told him that I wanted to become a golf course superintendent. He asked me, "WHY?" I proceeded to tell him what I thought were the good points of his job, i.e., driving around the course in a truck (a 13-year-old's statement), working with your hands and being around golf. Well, John then responded with what he felt were the bad points of the job, i.e., no summer vacation, not being with your family and dependent on the weather to perform your job.

It's 23 years later, and I often find myself asking the same question, WHY? Why did I ever become a superintendent! It's A.S. (always something) between floods, heat,

cold, dead grass, tall grass, players' expectations, boards and employees. I do not know how anyone can keep his head on straight. Who in their right mind would accept a job where you are expected to control Mother Nature, work long hours, have 40,000 people a year trample over one of the most sensitive grasses in the world and still have the course in US Open condition at all times. The funny thing is, we all try to do this at one time or another.

So why become a superintendent? It hit me the other morning at about 5 a.m. as I was watching a deer cross my 15th fairway with a coyote in chase. I came up with some positive points on why I became a golf course superintendent. What a great place to work. I see things in nature that a lot of other people will never see in their lives. I provide a product that a lot of people use for their enjoyment. We have many good people in our organization that would give the shirts off their backs to help me.

Golf is a great game, and I am proud to be part of it. These are just a couple of my reasons for becoming a superintendent. I think it is important that we look at why we chose our profession, especially when the weather, course conditions and players have gotten you down.

John Lapp was right; I do not like not being able to take a summer vacation, spending so much time away from my family or Mother Nature affecting course conditions. But the answer to the question WHY is, because I enjoy being a golf course superintendent.

One other quick note. As golf chairman, I would like to remind everyone the MAGCS has a prepayment policy for all the meetings. We must give host clubs a count prior to the event. It makes it very difficult to give an accurate count when there are five to ten people signing up the morning of the event. ■



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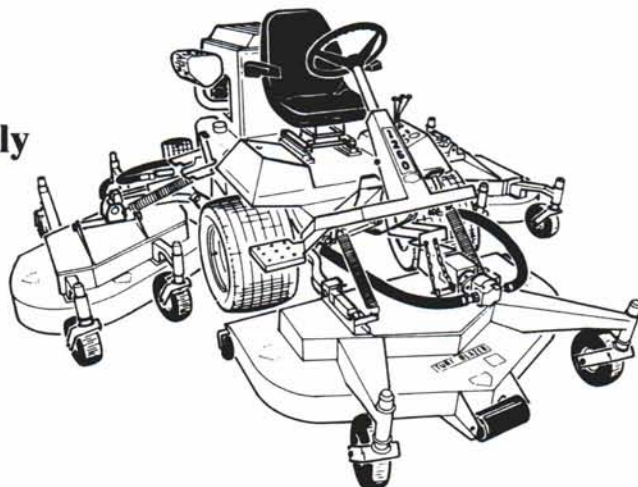
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# The Importance of Infrastructure

*Bruce Branham  
Department of Natural Resources  
and Environmental Sciences  
University of Illinois*

The turfgrass program at the University of Illinois has initiated a long-range planning process to chart the direction of our program over the next five years. One of the most important parts of our plan is to develop the infrastructure needed to produce an outstanding applied research program.

As I have worked at our research center for almost one year, several current deficiencies are obstacles to an outstanding field research program. First, our irrigation system is totally inadequate for research purposes. While I doubt that many turf managers have much sympathy for us since many of you, undoubtedly, feel that you are getting by with an inadequate irrigation system, our current system permits us to keep the grass green and not much else. For instance, if one of us wants a research study where irrigation is applied only when the grass begins to wilt, then an additional .8 acres of our research area will be affected by this watering strategy. Considering that we only have seven acres of research area (for all grass types and mowing heights), we waste a lot of land or impact other research because of our lack of irrigation control.

Secondly, we have no modified soil areas. Most every golf course built in recent time uses USGA specifications or some modification for the greens soil mix. The days of push-up greens,

particularly with the loam and clay loam soils of Illinois, are, for the most part, history. The greens area at the U. of I. research plots are constructed from a Drummer silty clay loam soil which is great for growing corn and soybeans but does not handle traffic very well. It also does not simulate the

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*We have no modified soil areas. Most every golf course built in recent time uses USGA specifications or some modification for the greens soil mix. The days of push-up greens, particularly with the loam and clay loam soils of Illinois, are, for the most part, history.*

---

growing conditions of most golf course greens in Illinois. The sports turf area has been growing rapidly over the past several years with more attention being placed on the construction and maintenance of athletic fields. Again, we do not have any area on our research farm that has the modified soils preferred for athletic field research.

While other deficiencies exist in our infrastructure, correcting the above problems will go a long way towards providing the facili-

ties needed to conduct the applied research that will be useful to the industry in Illinois. Therefore, I want to ask for your support as we begin the planning and acquisition of the supplies, materials, labor, equipment, and money needed to install a new irrigation system and modified soils for greens and athletic field research. What that support may entail is not clear at the present time; but as our plans develop, industry support will be crucial to getting what we need at the research center. This will be a major facelift for the research center on the University of Illinois campus.

## **Plant growth regulator use continuing to grow**

It is ironic that ten years after the commercial introduction of a new generation of plant growth regulators for turf use, the intended marketplace, i.e., the home lawn, has seen essentially no use of PGRs, while high-maintenance turf is rapidly incorporating the use of PGRs into their maintenance programs. Many marketing specialists at agricultural chemical companies were figuring out how many millions of acres of lawns there are in the United States and assuming that a very high percentage of them would sign up to be relieved of the tedium of mowing the lawn. But as science usually goes, and for a variety of reasons, the use of PGRs on home lawns has never taken off. However, with the addition of Primo, a new PGR from Ciba-Geigy, and the continued use of some of the other gibberellic acid-inhibiting PGRs, PGR use on the golf course is expanding rapidly.

*(continued on page 12)*