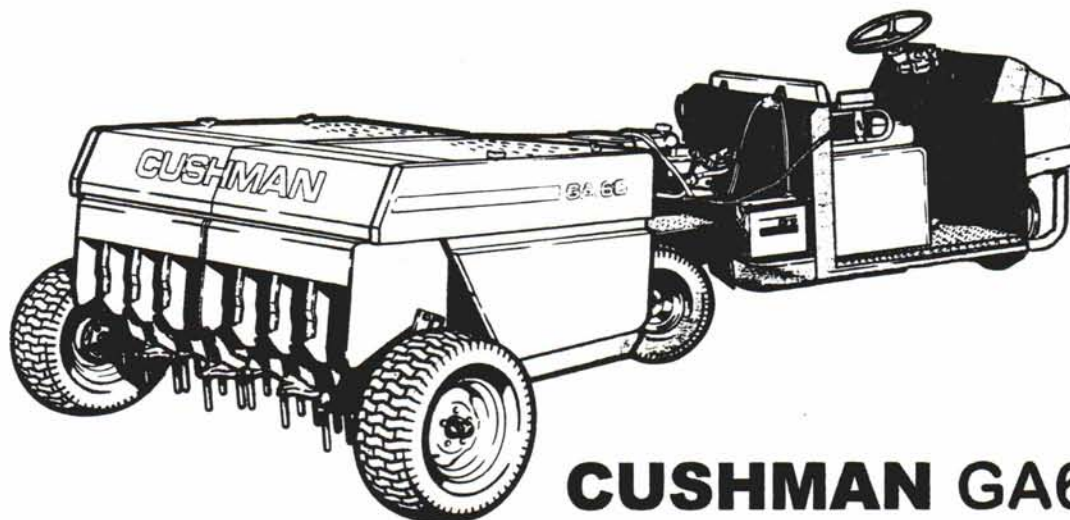


# The whole course aerator ...

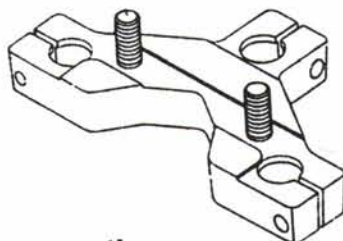


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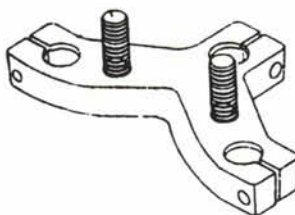
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### FAIRWAY



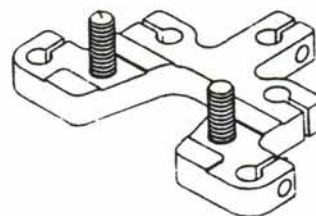
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5/8" solid

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*On Course* is published monthly. All articles, double-spaced, are required by the first of the month to make the next issue. Advertising is sold by the column inch, sixth page, quarter page, third page, half page and full page.

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## FEATURES

### Front Cover

Ruffled Feathers Golf Club, 11th Hole.

Photo credit: D2 Productions, Murphy / Scully

### 2 On Course With the President

Ed Braunsky

### 4 Director's Column

Kevin Czerkies

### ASK THE EXPERT

### 8 Golf Cart Usage

Daniel Albaugh

### SUPER -N- SITE PROFILE

### 12 Dan Albaugh -N- Ruffled Feathers Golf Club

Ray Schmitz

### 16 Look Out for Lightning on the Links!

Jozsef deKovacs

### 18 UST Upgrading vs. Removal

Steven H. Berning

### 26 Ray Gerber Editorial Award Guidelines

### 28 Ray Gerber Editorial Award Contestants 1996-1997

Fred Opperman

### 30 the Bull Sheet

Fred Opperman

### FEATURE ARTICLE

### 34 The Naturalized Golf Course

Patrick Norton

The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS) 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 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.





I need to talk to the membership about Erma and T.J. During the many years of being a golf course superintendent, I have found that you tend to depend on several people and things to get the job done right. You know what I am talking about. How often have you said to yourself, "Thank God for so and so!" or "I could not run this club without that certain piece of equipment."

Let me first tell you about Erma. She's a good old (and I do mean old) gal. Sure, there are times that she spouts off, but for the most part, she keeps running and running and running. I often think of getting rid of old Erma, but that would cost a lot of money. Maybe Erma knows this because she always seems to get going earlier and earlier each year. Erma is so darn important to me that I always try to keep her in good shape. She keeps me in good shape, too, by allowing me to run with her from one place to another (especially in the fairways). I give her several dollars each year to keep her parts moving. I also give Erma at least five months off per year. Thanks old gal for all of those early mornings and late nights that we have spent together.

I could not do my job without you. Forgive me for all of those times that I yelled at you. Forget about all of those expletives. You're a key part of my turf management, Erma. Thanks again!

It was early morning August 1 that I decided to name my irrigation system. We had not had a drop of rain for at least two weeks. How could you get the job done without a good (new or old) watering system? I can always depend on Erma—at least until she spouts off again!

T.J. is another story. Sure, I throw several dollars his way; but the five months off thing will not happen. Everyone has been through those weeks of horror when nothing seems to be going right. T.J. always seems to come through in the clutch. While Erma keeps spouting off, T.J. keeps smiling and keeps running and running. Whether it's a loose belt or a dull blade or a cracked block, T.J. always gets it fixed. T.J. (Tim Johnson) is the turf tech at The Royal Fox Golf Club in St. Charles for that fine super, Ernest Corsi. In his spare time, he helps me out at my club. I often thank God for T.J. If your turf tech has the same attitude and knowledge that his guy has, consider yourself lucky.

We all hear how important it is to have a good golf pro and a good golf course superintendent, but I need to throw in the need for a good turf equipment technician. We would not be out on the course mowing grass or raking bunkers or spraying plant protectants without the equipment running right. Stop what you are doing right now, and run up and give your turf tech a big hug. If your equipment is in good running shape around this time of the year, consider yourself in good hands.

We all, hopefully, have an Erma or a T.J. around. Our jobs are made so much easier with these important people and things. Thanks again Erma and T.J. By the way, you can stop hugging your turf tech now. People might start to talk!

One side note. Thanks to everyone for keeping the MAGCS in good running shape. It's been a long year, but I can hear "Jingle Bells" in the distance!

Ed Braunsky, CGCS  
President, MAGCS

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Kevin Czerkies  
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**S**uperintendents are faced with many day-to-day challenges. For this month's Director's Column, I would like to share some thoughts on a few of them.

There are many different salesmen that call on superintendents. They sell pesticides, fertiliz-

ers, turf equipment, shop equipment, golf course accessories, miracle cleaners, light bulbs, nuts, bolts, wasp spray and anything else you could possibly think of that somehow relates to the maintenance of a golf course. Many of these items we do need to purchase from time to time. How we decide which products, and from whom to purchase them, is the challenge. They all claim that their product is superior to their competitors. Two services that have really become popular and quite competitive are deep tine/drill aerification and bulk application of fertilizers to fairways and roughs in spreader trucks.

On a smaller scale, we've all experienced the salesman with a suitcase in one hand and a 3,000-page catalog in the other. These guys always show up unannounced, and they have the save-all product that will make our jobs

ten times easier. They try to give you a screwdriver or flashlight if you give them an order. They all sell the same orange scented, all-purpose cleaner. Same stuff, only different name.

One of my biggest problems is when I purchase turf care equipment. Being a government body, I am required to obtain sealed bids for any purchase over \$10,000. This makes it difficult to always get the equipment that I really want. I can write a very tight bid specification around a certain piece of equipment, but this limits the qualified bidders. Often only one company can meet my bid specifications. This somewhat defeats the whole purpose of bidding. Or, I can write a loose specification and have to explain why I don't want to purchase from the lowest bidder. This can be quite trying when you have a board

(continued on page 26)



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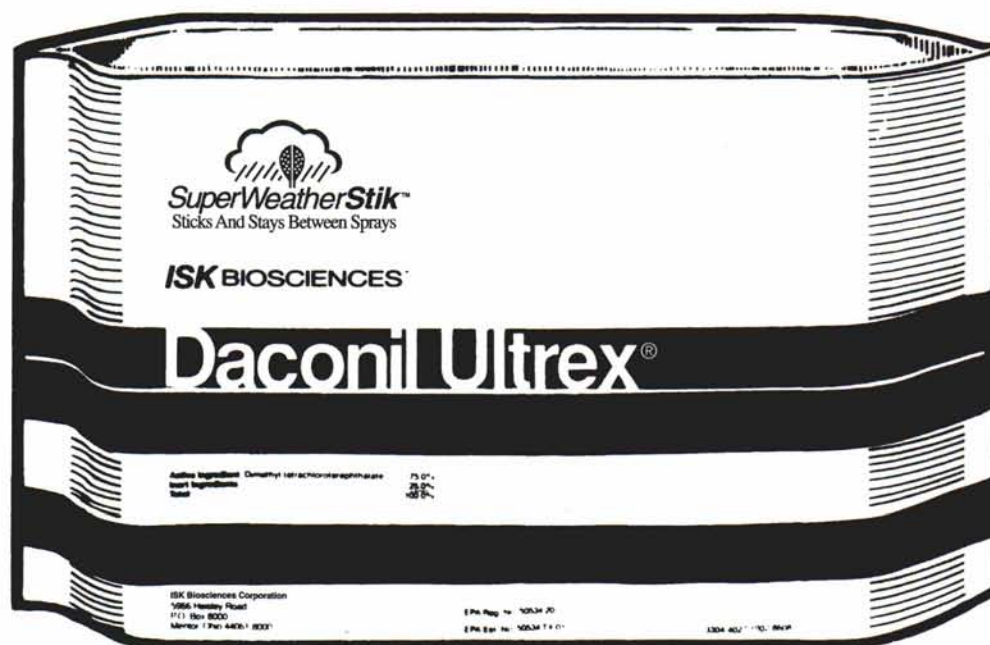
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# Golf Cart Usage

Daniel Albaugh  
Ruffled Feathers G.C.

**T**he topic that I have chosen to write about for this month's *On Course*, Ask the Expert column is golf cart traffic and its control. I believe that the general golfing public has a lack of education and understanding when it comes to golf and the damage that golf carts cause. I believe that our job is made particularly difficult by the fact that fewer than one percent of the golfing public has any agricultural background in their upbringing or education. These golfers all watch the nationally televised golf events and do not understand that the event has been prepared for with much forethought and meticulous detail. One of these small details is the exclusion of golf cart traffic.

In the beginning of golf, you had a man, a ball, and a few clubs. The golf course itself was sculpted by Mother Nature with help from the winds of time. Rules of play evolved, and golf made its way to America. At the turn of the century, many of our best known and loved golf courses were constructed. Many clubs that were built developed rivalries amongst the memberships, which, in turn, developed more courses.

Back in those days, the preferred method to play the game was to walk, or, if you were lucky enough, you could afford to have a caddy carry your bag for you. As caddies carried these golfers' bags, they themselves developed a love for the game and hence became the second generation of players.

According to Walter H. Fuchs, CGCS, the first golf carts were developed by American

companies such as E-Z GO, Cushman and Harley Davidson. All these carts showed up around 1951. At first, not many players used these carts. The typical player that used carts at this time was a player with some kind of physical condition who usually could not enjoy the game without the aid of the mobility provided by

---

*Back in those days, the preferred method to play the game was to walk, or, if you were lucky enough, you could afford to have a caddy carry your bag for you. As caddies carried these golfers' bags, they themselves developed a love for the game and hence became the second generation of players.*

---

the mechanized cart. In the late 1960s, golf carts began to be utilized by most golf courses. At some golf courses, they were used more than at others. At these courses, the greenkeepers at that time started to notice that certain areas, especially near tees and greens, began to show damage due to the wear and tear caused by carts. Once these greenkeepers completed tee and green side cart path installation, they noticed that the wear and tear kept eating away at the ends of the paths. Walter

said that the golfers always hit the same spot; and over the years, he found that if you end the cart path with a gentle curve into the rough, it seems to scatter the players or carts in multiple directions. This minimizes wear at the ends of the paths. This confirms my observation that most golfers are like sheep; they just follow the player in front of them much like sheep hopping through a fence.

In the 1970s, new courses were constructed with golf carts in mind. These new courses were built with continuous cart paths. The idea was that if you had a continuous path, you would not find any worn areas. The idea was nice, but now golf course superintendents found most of the wear at the entrances and exits of the fairways. Again the golfers or carts all converged in the same spots. This is when the rope and stake market developed and, unfortunately, is still here today. To me, nothing looks more obtrusive than ropes and stakes; but until someone develops something better, I believe that they offer the best way to direct cart traffic away from areas that are wet or worn. At Ruffled Feathers, I have found the Flex-Stake to work well in our situation.

Revenue is the cry heard by golf course superintendents. Without carts, golf courses would not make any money. I have read that 85 to 90 percent of the damage inflicted on turf is caused by golf carts. I believe that most, if not all, the money made in cart revenue is lost when you consider the cost of the labor to maintain the cart fleet, the cost to resod all the areas that are worn to bare soil, the cost to irrigate the newly sodded areas, and then the cost to repair the areas that were damaged

(continued on page 10)



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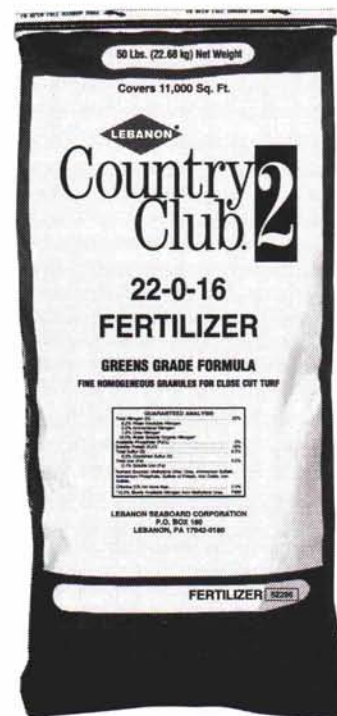
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## Golf Cart Usage

(continued from page 8)

while you were repairing the first area (not to mention the cost to move the ropes and stakes around every other day.) However, it is difficult to put numbers on damage that may happen as a result of cart traffic and explain this to a number cruncher.

Another thing that I often hear is that golf carts speed up play. Here at Ruffled Feathers, I have observed that on days that we are on cart paths only and we have a booked tee sheet that it takes between 4 1/2 and 5 1/2 hours to play all 18 holes. On days that we are using the 90 degree rule or are under no cart restrictions, it takes the same amount of time. What the cart does is gives the golfers more time to drive around and hunt for golf balls in our federally protected wetlands or allows them to drive up and down the fairways

from sprinkler head to sprinkler head to check the yardage marked on the sprinkler heads.

I am a firm believer that a walking golfer is more attuned to his game than a riding golfer. The

*I am a firm believer that a walking golfer is more attuned to his game than a riding golfer. The walker is at one with his environment and game.*

walker is at one with his environment and game; he is walking down the hole from tee to green. He passes the sprinklers and yardage markers on his way down

the hole from shot to shot. He can tell if a particular fairway is wet or dry and, therefore, usually does not have to second-guess his shot and club up or club down. The walking golfer has less time to hunt for lost balls and pays more attention to his shot; therefore, he spends less time searching for errant shots. The golfer on the cart seems to pay more attention to the general direction that the ball flies and not where the ball lands. He thinks that he will find the ball faster by driving up and down the rough even though he did not see the ball bounce to another area.

All national golf events are widely televised and are played at courses that are well conditioned. The preparation for a U.S. Open typically starts five to six years prior to the event. Danny Quast, superintendent at Medinah Country Club who hosted the last

(continued on page 14)

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