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Performance Appraising

(continued from page 20)

1. No surprises. It is not fair for an employee to hear of a criticism for the first time during an appraisal.
2. Keep the employee involved.
3. Focus on performance improvement.
4. Keep daily documentation, both positives and negatives. By doing so, this will give you an opportunity to reduce the "recency error" (focusing on actions of recent memory).
5. Be prepared—both employee and appraiser. Give ample warning of time and date of meeting.
6. Agree on terminology. Since we all see and hear things differently, make sure that you

both understand what you are hearing and saying.

7. Make performance a regular part of your discussion.

Another tip that was discussed to encourage a fair appraisal was the 30/15 principle: 30 minutes/month talk about performance with the employee; 15 minutes/week review personal goals by yourself.

There are two things that we can do as employers and appraisers to encourage our employees to succeed. The first is to clarify expectations: the purpose of performance is to deliver value. A goal statement would be an intent to deliver value. Work together with your employees to develop a goal statement for the upcoming year. Pinpoint results that you would both like to achieve, actions/behavior that you would

like to see or change. Be specific. Do not leave any doubt of the expectations that you have for that employee for the next year. Once this exercise has been completed, you should both understand what needs to be accomplished and how in order to get to the next level. There is probably going to be a certain amount of confusion and revision necessary, but over time, this process will become second nature.

The second aspect of success is coaching, coaching for improved performance. To me this means utilizing the 30/15 exercise all year: Daily or weekly monitoring of progress by the employee and visiting the goal statement periodically throughout the year to insure that objectives are being met, both are satisfied with the progress and wording, and that you are "on track" with the statement. During

(continued on page 24)

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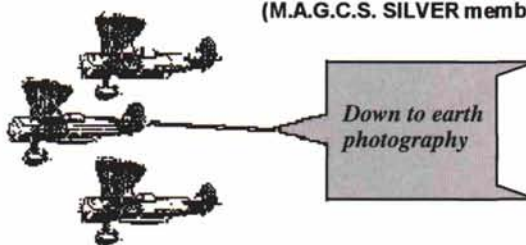
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Performance Appraising

(continued from page 22)

the coaching period, give the employee your undivided attention. Encourage dialogue, especially from the employee. Ask open-ended questions and solicit information/examples during this time in order to better understand his or her feelings. Use silence as a means to get them to verbalize. More often than not, the employee will begin to talk during periods of silence because it is so intimidating. These are all examples of ways to encourage dialogue between the employee and yourself. Remember, the feedback your employee gives at this point will allow you to better understand, evaluate and reduce perceptions.

Performance appraisals, when utilized properly, can provide you with valuable information about yourself, your employee and your organization. They will provide you with a means by which communication lines are opened between you and the employee, establish some credible information by which to properly evaluate employees, provide documentation and a system by which raises and promotions may be given, and offer an opportunity to fairly establish goals and the criteria by which one may attain those goals.

Though following the information above will not reduce the amount of work involved in evaluating my department, I am hopeful that it will make it easier to do so. In addition, I feel it will hold my employees more accountable and responsible for their actions and behavior and give me an opportunity to resolve conflicts more quickly and more decisively. ■

Nick Hongisto -N- Schaumburg G.C.

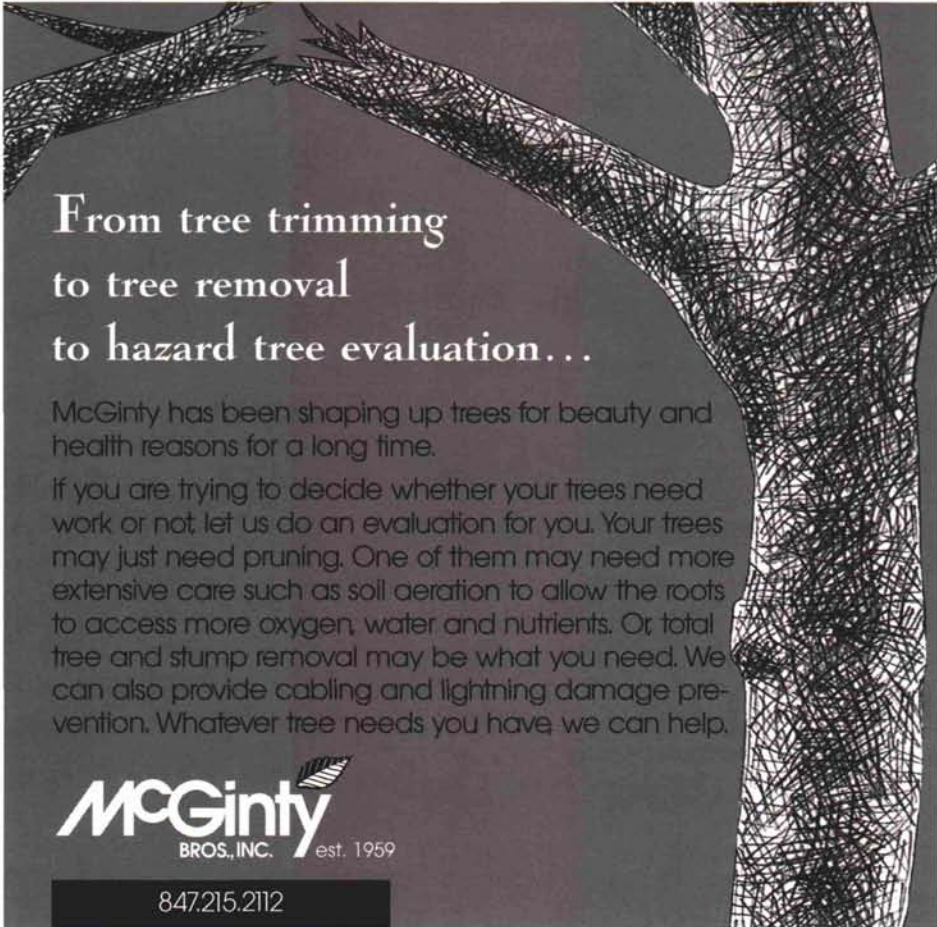
(continued from page 10)

the new layout is the fact that despite the wide-ranging changes, many of the mature trees were able to be saved giving the course an established feel with the benefit of fresh playing surfaces.

Nick's greatest challenge was in 1993-1994 when he was responsible for essentially four different 9-hole courses: Walnut Greens, the newly finished nine holes at SGC, the nine holes then under construction, and the nine yet to be improved. He says that getting new turf up and maturing it to the point where it becomes playable requires constant attention (especially when it turns out that a year like 1995 is looming on the horizon). Apparently, Nick has enjoyed some success in managing new turf since this year, for the second time,

Schaumburg will be hosting the local regional qualifier for the U.S. Open.

Nick, Diane and the boys live in La Fox, near St. Charles, where they are actively involved in their church (Nick is on the building committee, among other things). He led the prayer breakfast at the 1997 GCSAA National Convention in Las Vegas. Nick is one of the most computer-literate superintendents in the area. He spoke at the 1996 MAGCS Annual Meeting at Butterfield C.C. on using the Internet and has written articles for *On Course* on the subject. Nick enjoys his family and wishes he could spend more time with the boys, especially in the summer. By the way, with two boys in the house, Nick and Diane don't have to go out anymore to enjoy the demolition derby. ■



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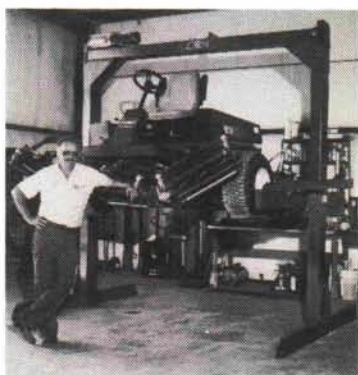
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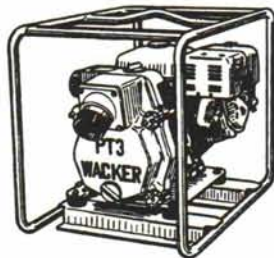
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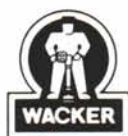


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To Cover or Not to Cover
(continued from page 16)

greens nearest oak trees that were shaded had developed disease; and yet, on greens 20 feet away where the sun hit the greens, they would be fine. At Oak Park C.C., Al also used covers on some tees. He covers the first tee and all of the par 3 tees. He states that inevitably some golfers must hit balls during the winter, and the first tee would always take a large beating. Also, golfers like to hit balls to a target, which is generally the green. He used to put snow fence and

ropes around the par 3 tees and to the par 3 greens, but then members thought it was a great sport to hit balls over the snow fence. In closing, Al said the use of covers helps the tees to regenerate turf and also effectively discourages and/or shuts down unwanted play!

There are many ways to skin a cat, and you must decide what works best for your situation at the course where you work. I believe that this little article offers insights on covers and the many different thoughts

and uses of covers from some successful superintendents in the Chicago area.

In closing, I would like to thank Tim Davis, Al Fierst, and last, but not least, my father for their thoughts, insights, and time. ■

Director's Column
(continued from page 8)

ways of soliciting copy, but they all involved some form of coercion. I'm still new enough at this that I believe coercion isn't necessary. Everyone of us has had something happen to us that the rest of us would benefit from knowing. C'mon, share with the rest of the class. The strength of this association is the willingness of its members to help each other. Put something down on paper or call Fred with some news for the "the Bull Sheet." If Fred receives it by the first of the month, it'll get in the next month's issue.

Thoughts from the Pasture:

I am not a turf manager; I am a golf course superintendent. My professional efforts are not designed to grow grass; in fact, a lot of what I do conflicts directly with best management practices of turfgrass culture.

My job is to provide golfers with a place to play their game, and a well-maintained putting surface is a far cry from the ideal turfgrass environment. I have heard it said that we golf course superintendents are the only agronomists that grow their crop to its detriment:

We aren't looking for high yields, and our harvest isn't measured in bushels.

We subject our fragile crop to stresses that keep us awake at night all for the good of the game:

- We mow our crop daily at heights measured in hundredths of an inch.
- We often mow when it's wet because it's the only time we can do our job.
- We roll surfaces that are already compacted from foot traffic that is funneled to one 4.25-inch spot.

- These surfaces are regularly subjected to footwear studded with spikes that are longer than the height of the turf (thankfully, this practice is rapidly losing favor among gentlemen and ladies).

- We don't irrigate the crop when it needs it; we often have to wait until it is on the verge of wilt.

We do these things not because it's good for the turf; we do them for the good of the game. ■

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If Golfers Only Knew . . .
(continued from page 35)

Ah, but why not just aerify earlier? For one thing, the holes would not heal as quickly and the greens would still be bumpy. For another thing, the superintendent would have to fertilize early to help the holes heal and that would, you guessed it, encourages *Poa annua* seedheads.

Agronomically speaking, there is one statement that sums it up: Winter play is bad for the turf, bad for soil and, therefore, bad for the golfers in the long run even though they may not appreciate it in February. If the price of winter play is *Poa annua* invasion, bumpy putting conditions and early aerification, where is there safe middle ground? It is easy. Stay off the greens and play the course backwards using the tees as temporary putting greens. This solution gives golfers a chance to stretch their legs during the winter and gives superintendents the opportunity to properly prepare the greens for the regular golfing season.

When is it best to bring up the topic of playing the course backwards? Possibly the best time is during the week of the U.S. Open Championship. When the best players in the world are rolling long putts over the glass-like greens of the Olympic Club, which golfer would object to saving the greens for the best time of year? ■



Placing the tee markers on a level area in front of the greens will guide winter golfers around the course when it is set up backwards.



Using the tees as temporary winter greens will give anxious golfers the chance to stretch their legs without sacrificing good playing conditions during the spring and summer.



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the Bull Sheet

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 27 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Schaumburg G.C.

May 4 — ITF Combined Meeting at "The General," Eagle Ridge Resort.

June 15 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Fox Valley G.C.

Remember that this year's combined golf day will be played at "The General," Eagle Ridge Resort's new 18-hole course. The event will be May 4 and will accommodate 200 golfers. Both a morning and afternoon shotgun will be offered, and there will be a midday buffet for both golfing groups. The event is open to all, and both foursomes or single players can register.

Penn State students held a contest to choose what item from the University they would send into space on the April 2 space flight. The student body choose turf seed, from which a bluegrass variety was chosen. Once back from space, the seed will be propagated, and the seed from it will be used around the state to seed the various other PSU campuses.

The Board of Directors would like to remind all members to be courteous and respectful of others during our meetings and educational sessions by turning off all cellular phones and pagers. It is very disruptive not only to hear phones ringing but to have people leave the meeting to take

the call or page. Please turn off all phones and pagers when attending your next meeting.

1998 MAGCS Hospitality Room

Brian Bossert
Bryn Mawr C.C.

The GCSAA Conference has come and gone, and even El Niño couldn't prevent the MAGCS hospitality room from being a huge success. The two-night event at the Anaheim Marriott officially started at 5:54 p.m. on Thursday, February 5, when Lynn Wesson requested a gin and tonic. However, the planning started months earlier, and the following companies were responsible for providing the financial support to make such an event possible:

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These companies generously donated \$15,200 towards the cost of the festivities. That does top last year's total, and judging by all the positive comments, it was greatly appreciated by those in attendance. Please keep this in mind as you make your purchasing decisions in the upcoming year.

The first evening was marked with several significant announcements. For the first time in many years, a chapter team from the MAGCS won the conference tournament. The team was comprised of Al Pondel, Tommy Robinson, Randy Wahler and Bob Kronn. Additionally, Al finished first overall with a one-day score of 69. Congratulations on the fine showing!

Unfortunately, all the news was not so positive. The untimely passing of Adolph Bertucci was noted, and Paul Voykin graciously eulogized his longtime friend. Adolph was a fixture at all the

(continued on page 32)