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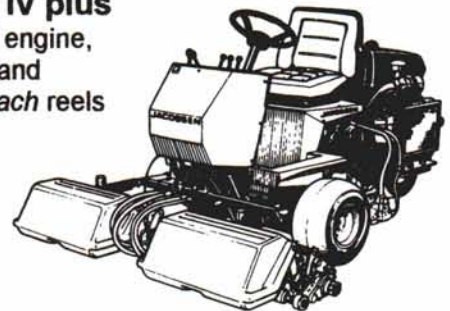
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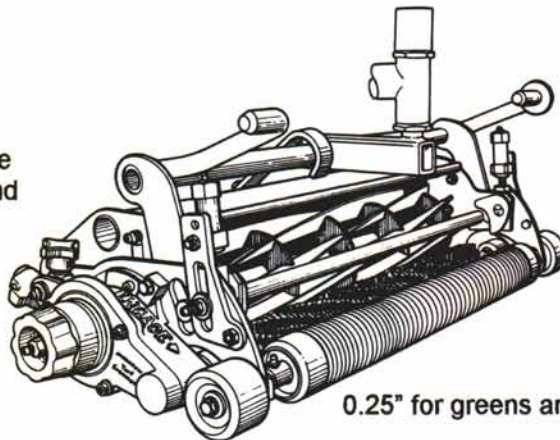


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PHOTOGRAPHY

Raymond Schmitz

TURFGRASS ADVISOR

Dr. Randy T. Kane

University of Illinois & CDGA
630-954-2753

EDITOR: **Fred D. Opperman**

810 Greenwood Avenue
Carpentersville, IL 60110
Phone & Fax 847-428-5009 or email: magcsoc@aol.com

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Fred Opperman

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.



Kevin Czerkies, CGCS
Sportsman's C.C.

Just before the holidays, I had the honor of being invited to attend a meeting representing the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents with several of our allied associations: the Illinois PGA, Illinois Junior Golf Foundation, and Chicago District Golf Association. The reason for this meeting was to discuss the "Hook a Kid on Golf" program. This program was founded in 1994 by the National Alliance for Youth Sports.

This meeting was put together and hosted by Jerry Rich, owner of Harvest Rich Farms. Jerry is taking a hands-on approach to getting this program up and running in the Chicago area. He proposed that the Woodstock Conference Center be turned into a junior golf camp that would be supportive to the "Hook a Kid on Golf" program. The Woodstock Conference Center is currently owned by Northern Illinois University, and they would be willing to lease out the 75-acre site for such a development.

All this is fine and dandy, but as I sat there, I kept wondering to myself, why was I invited to this meeting? Well, finally it came to light. Should this development become a reality, the MAGCS will be asked for input on the care and maintenance of this facility. One part of the "Hook a Kid on Golf" program is that these future golfers of America learn the proper care of a golf course. Not only would they learn the simplicities of ball mark repairing and divot replacing, but older kids would be provided with hands-on training of mowing, cup changing, and trap raking. These young golfers would gain a greater sense of

respect for golf courses which may also steer them in the direction of future employment in our profession. I urge you to be supportive of this endeavor if your help is called upon.

The MAGCS will also be getting a little more press. The Chicago District Golf Association has decided to give each allied association a spot in their magazine, *Chicago District Golfer*, to showcase any information they see fit. MAGCS Public Relations Chairman Jim McNair has volunteered his efforts to see that pertinent information is supplied to the CDGA for this space. Thanks, Jim.

I'm looking forward to the March MAGCS meeting. Not only are we returning to Nordic Hills, but our educational program has been enhanced. The education will be a half-day GCSAA seminar sponsored by Etonic. CEU's will be available for GCSAA certification. After the education, a nice lunch will be served, followed by our business meeting. Those of you unable to attend the educational portion are certainly invited for the lunch and meeting. I hope to see you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Czerkies".

Kevin Czerkies, CGCS
President, MAGCS

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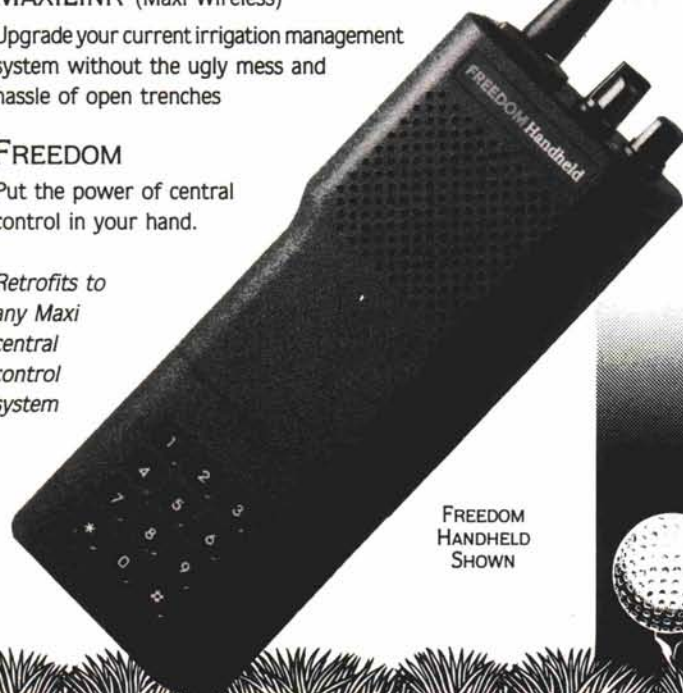
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*Luke Strojny
Poplar Creek G.C.*

I have been told that a rolling stone gathers no moss. I have found this is very true about the MAGCS. In the last three years I have served on the Board of Directors, I have been amazed how much work goes into running an organization the size of the MAGCS. Planning for our events goes on months in advance. Sites have to be secured, educational topics and speakers have to be arranged, golf prizes have to be ordered and golf events have to be planned. The list can go on and on.

There are also many administrative duties that have to be performed month in and month out such as monthly meeting notices, job referrals, paying the association bills, compiling a list of meeting participants and depositing the monies. A big thank you goes out to George Minnis and outgoing Secretary Bob Maibush for performing these duties.

How about *On Course*. Articles are written well in advance of the published date, advertisements have to be secured and monies collected, plus a thousand other day-to-day decisions that have to be made. Fred Opperman and out-

going Editorial Chairman Jim McNair should be congratulated for their hard work.

There is another group which keeps the MAGCS rolling; they are all the sponsors for our monthly events. If we did not have their generous donations, our monthly events would cost far more than they currently do.

Speaking of generous donations, Matt Hurley of Standard Golf Company has donated thirty-six TurfStone teemarkers with the MAGCS logo engraved on them. The teemarkers look great and will be a welcome addition to our golf events. The MAGCS Board of Directors and membership would like to thank Matt and Standard Golf Company for their donation.

We all have been asked, "What do you do during the winter?" My usual response is we perform maintenance on equipment, purchase equipment and supplies for the upcoming season, snow removal, etc. By the end of my response, they have a better understanding of what my job entails and see that there is never a down or slow time. This is true about the MAGCS; just because the snow is flying and golf is dormant for awhile, we are still rolling along. ■

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Rub of the Green



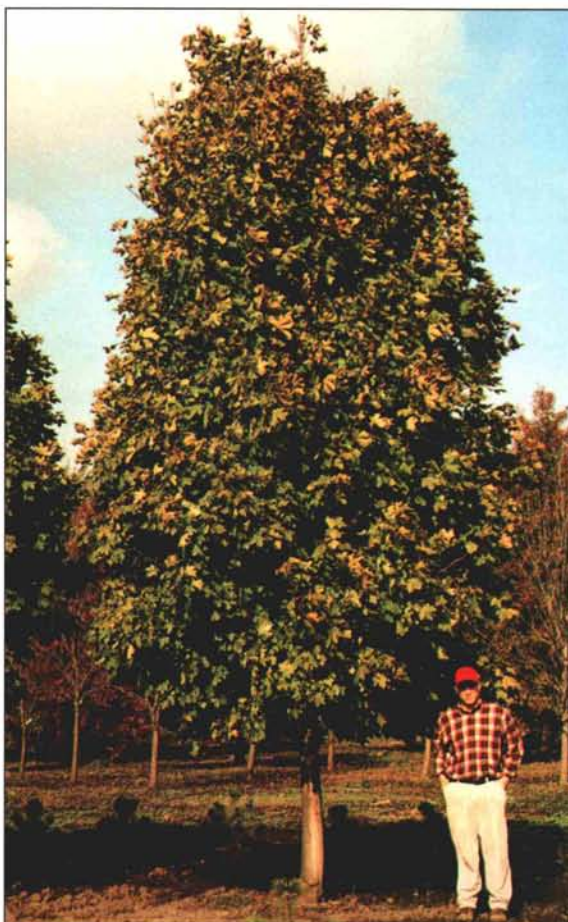
Gregory E. Martin
Martin Design Partnership

The No. 8 "Postage Stamp" at Royal Troon.

On a recent once-in-a-lifetime trip to Ireland and Scotland, I had the good fortune to play a variety of world-renowned golf courses like Prestwick, Carnoustie, Royal Troon, St. Andrews, Turnberry-Ailsa and Ballybunion, to name a few. At Prestwick and Carnoustie, I found that bunkers were perilous penalties, not just hazards. At St. Andrews, the history was indelible, and course knowledge was essential. Elegant Turnberry required long carries over goarse-filled canyons as a punctuation to its refined reputation. Troon's modest seaside terrain was not characteristic of its difficulty, and Ballybunion was a golf purist's paradise.

Without describing the boring details of the rugged, sandhill terrain, the magnificent views, the stunning beauty, or the significant history, what impressed me the most was the simplicity of the courses and the culture. Simple

(continued on page 8)



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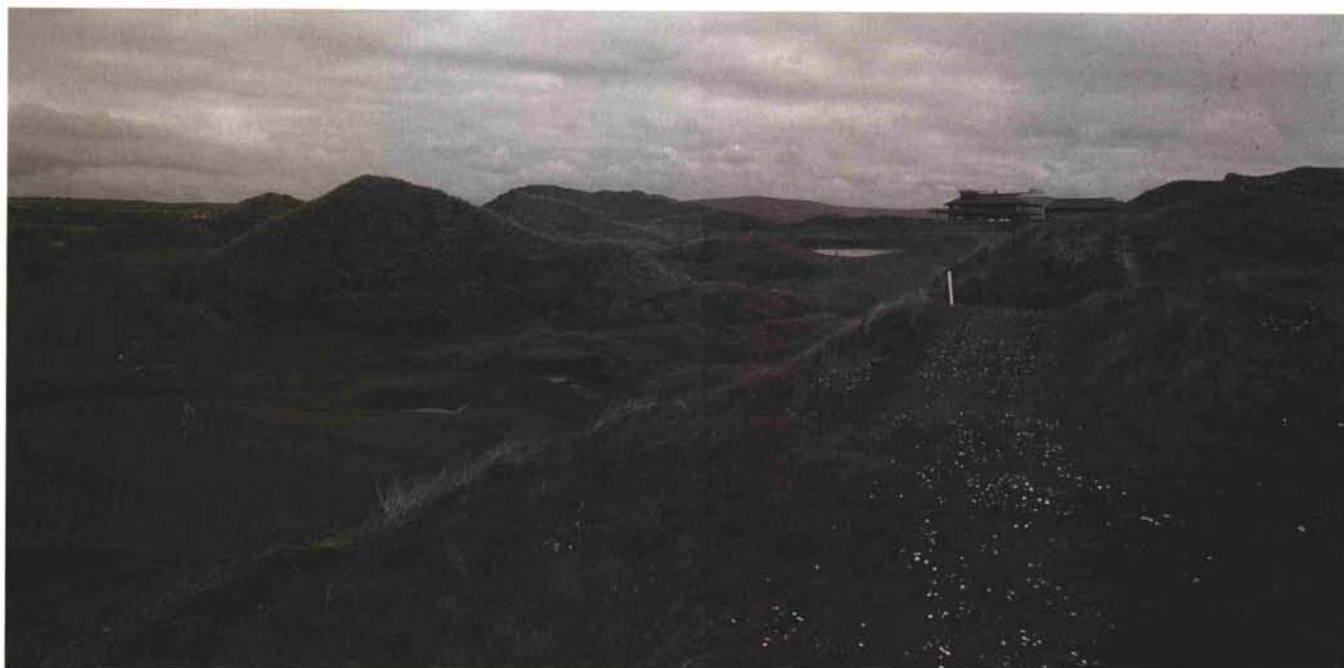
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The final holes at Ballybunion.

Rub of the Green

(continued from page 6)

lives and simply wonderful golf courses. This is a culture filled with a rational acceptance of life's good fortune and bad luck, and their golf courses illustrated that philosophy.

Let me explain . . .

When I did manage to find the fairway (it must have been a mishit), it may have found clover, or a divot, or a bare, tight lie. The rolling fairways were broad and distinctively lined with the characteristic deep rough. The exceptions on the golf course were plush fairways and slick greens. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, I was more often in the rough. It was knee deep in some places and spotted with heather and goarse. When I was lucky enough to find my ball, sometimes I had a good lie and clear shot to the green. Good lies and bad lies, such is life.

"Rub of the Green" is an often-used term in the golf industry and implies a certain degree of good and bad luck encountered on the golf course. Golfers in Europe have different expecta-

tions of golf and are true endorsers of "the rub." The competitive spirit is alive and well in the British Isles, but the compulsion for perfect fairways and fast

greens is slight. Even at Royal Troon, site of this year's British Open Championship, the course was conditioned so that fairways,

(continued on page 10)

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Rub of the Green

(continued from page 8)

greens and rough were sustainable and maintainable . . . tough strategically, quick, fair and true.

It is unfortunate that we American "revolutionaries" have become so fascinated with fast greens and a high rating on the stimpmeter. Wouldn't we rather declare true, honest greens year after year instead of constantly fighting Mother Nature to maintain a 10 on the stimp? Is it any coincidence that the Europeans have dominated Ryder Cup play in the last 14 years. It appears that we Americans are spoiled a bit. We need to change our golf culture to a greater acceptance of honest environments and true golf courses rather than treating it as a beauty pageant.

Each of the courses that I played on this trip, which have seen decades of maintenance, seemed to be constantly monitored with a perspective toward long-term sustainability, a certain degree of landscape sensitivity and sensibility. These courses are not subject to the specific whims of over-

enthusiastic green committees, nor are they subjected to time-honored traditions of high chemical doses. These are world-renowned golf courses with maintenance budgets half of most golf courses here in the States, and yet, the courses are wonderful examples of a "pure golf experience."

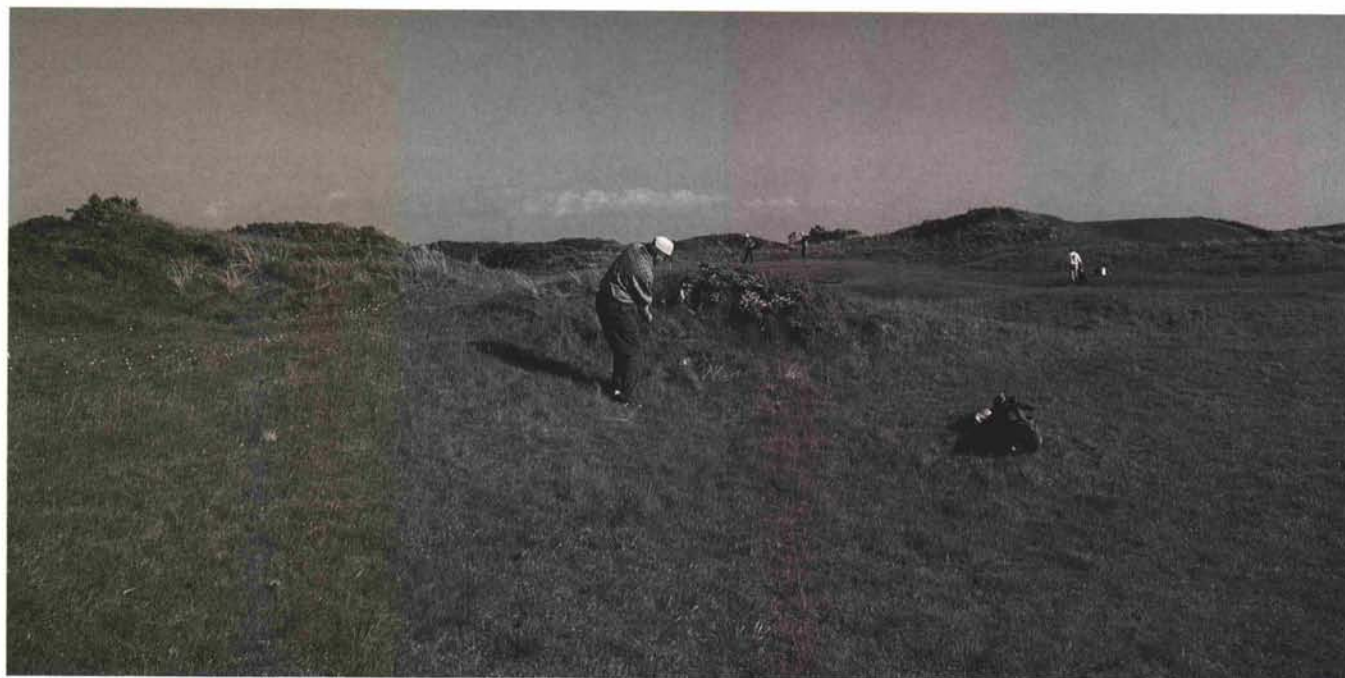
For instance, as I played Ballybunion Golf Club, with its mountainous sandhills, cavernous bunkers, wavelike fairways and strong breezes, I was overcome with a moment of clarity, an understanding of the game's soul and purity. It all felt as though it belonged, naturally. There was nothing tricky there, nothing forced. Even though rain was dripping down my back, this was the single greatest golf experience I have ever had. "Winter rules" . . . ha! Play the ball as it lies: up, down and sideways . . . and have fun doing it.

Strategically, though, American golf courses stack up against many of those that I played. While we don't have seaside views, a history of open championships and sand on which to build the cours-

es, we can develop courses that have the honored characteristics of sustainability and maintainability—a naturalist's approach. Overseas golfers are more accepting of unique characteristics that are a result of site specific conditions and microclimates, including heavy rough, steep unmaintained slopes, native shrub masses and tallgrass meadows.

Most of us are in the associated golf professions because of an appreciation of natural characteristics. Golf is an environmental encounter, a recreational experience as much as it is a sport and should be treated as such. Are the golfers in the United Kingdom any "less demanding" for a great golf adventure? Of course not. Golf in the Kingdom is typically played in three hours or less. In fact, 36 holes of golf is not an "all-day affair," and more often a common event. It is curious that even though these courses have less maintained area and more deep rough, golf is played more swiftly. "Wall-to-wall" maintenance must not be the answer.

(continued on page 12)



Playing from the rough at Royal Troon.