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FEATURES

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FRONT COVER

Tom Maple has won awards for his nature photography. Tom is also a legendary high school basketball coach, now in his 25th and final season heading the varsity boys squad at Grant Community High School in Fox Lake, Illinois.

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John Gurke

The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization 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.



Donald S. Ferreri
Seven Bridges G.C.

What an exciting time for me, to be entering the new millennium as your president. I would like to thank all of you for your support, past and present. It is truly an honor to be given this opportunity to lead the Midwest at this challenging time of change. The world around us is changing rapidly, and it is inevitable that the MAGCS will experience growth and change as well. Our task as your Board of Directors is to put a positive and beneficial spin on all the opportunities presented to the Association.

I would like to take this space to thank all of the directors over the past seven years for their time and talents. It has been a winning team year after year. A special thanks to Past President Kevin Czerkies and Directors Jim McNair and Dan Anderson as they will be departing from the Board this year. On behalf of the entire membership, I thank you for your contributions and dedication.

We, as a Board, are looking forward to this year; we have many projects in the works that will strengthen and grow our Association. I would like to thank the "old-timers" if I may, and they know who they are. Through their continuing hard work and perseverance, many of us came by the opportunities we have today. The golf course superintendent has become a "player" in the industry. Opportunities are present in our jobs for advancement and recognition, both of which are deserved. We know the golf course is the engine of every facility. It was through noble past efforts that we climbed, and it will be our future efforts that will continue to enhance our profession.

This leads me to the challenge I would like to present. This challenge is for you. I know the Board is capable of running the day-to-day grind of the Association with contributions from our executive secretary, George Minnis, and editor, Cathy Miles Ralston. The energy needs to come from the membership, all classes of members. Please ask yourself what you have to donate to your Association. What are your talents, passions or time allowances? Every one of us has something to give. Are you giving back for what you take out? I know we ask this every year. Even at church, generally only one month of the year do they ask for your tithing, and this is that month. As the Association grows, more exists to be done. So:

- Write an article.
- Host a meeting.
- Participate on a committee.
- Propose new ideas.
- Help with the survey distribution this year.

- Offer solutions to old problems.
- Create new problems.
- Promote the MAGCS.
- Educate and network.

It is an old philosophy but still an accurate one: The Association will only be as good as the membership allows it to be. The MAGCS is one of the best tools we have to use in our industry. Let us then use it to the best of our ability. We have a strong voice regionally as well as nationally. Keep in mind that this Association belongs to us—its members—not the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is a group of dedicated volunteers entrusted with the operation of the Association. I, along with the rest of the Board, will have an open door policy to hear your grievances and concerns. I encourage everyone to voice his or her opinions. This is what has gotten us where we are.

That is your challenge; I sincerely hope you all accept it and act on it. I promise to listen to all takers. I also promise not to bring it up again this year. (I will have to write a past president's column next year, though.)

As the holiday season is upon us, I would like to remind everyone to keep their priorities in order and use December for some good quality family time. May the spirit of the season be upon you and your family, and God bless.



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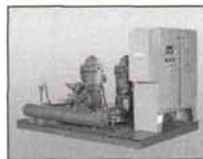
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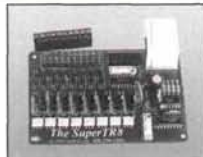
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*Joel Purpur, CGCS
River Forest C.C.*

Fulfilling an obligation as chairman of the Past Presidents Council, I find myself slaving over a hot computer for the MAGCS once again. Writing as a past president of the MAGCS is strange in that I tend to think of myself as younger than I really am and not a "past" anything. "I remember when" is becoming more common in my everyday thinking. I remember when I was one of the youngest guys at the MAGCS monthly meetings, sponging as much knowledge as I could from the seasoned veterans; now I don't know half of the younger crowd. I remember going to my first Chicagoland salary meeting and hearing Bruce Sering say he made a figure many times that of my salary. Big deal, I got my meals at work for only half price! Although my "remember whens" may be increasing, I am not yet to the point where I can't remember what a "remember when" was. Try saying that five times fast.

So what does the Past Presidents Council do? No, we don't just sit around the table and moan about everything ... not the whole time, anyway. Once a

year, it is a goal of the Past Presidents Council to get the MAGCS past presidents together and review the operations of our Association. The agenda typically covers topics suggested by past presidents, MAGCS directors and MAGCS members. We have a lot to cover, and these meetings have historically been lengthy. A big "thank you" to the devoted past presidents who have participated. After the meeting concludes, a summary is prepared and immediately rushed . . . okay, sent off later to the meeting participants requesting corrections. Once finalized, the summary is again rushed, or sent, to the MAGCS president for review and dissemination. Over the past few years, the MAGCS presidents have been kind enough to allow me the opportunity to per-

sonally review the Past Presidents Council's report with the Board of Directors. It continues to be very encouraging how favorably received by the Board our recommendations have been and how often ideas of the Past Presidents Council undergo implementation.

Our Association is great because the people within the Association make it work. Association operations may be better during some times than others, but with any large organization, constant change and evolution are needed. The Nominating Committee perseveres in the important and difficult job of finding strong individuals willing to serve as MAGCS directors and in that role, keep the Association running smoothly and advancing. Even more impor-

(continued on page 24)



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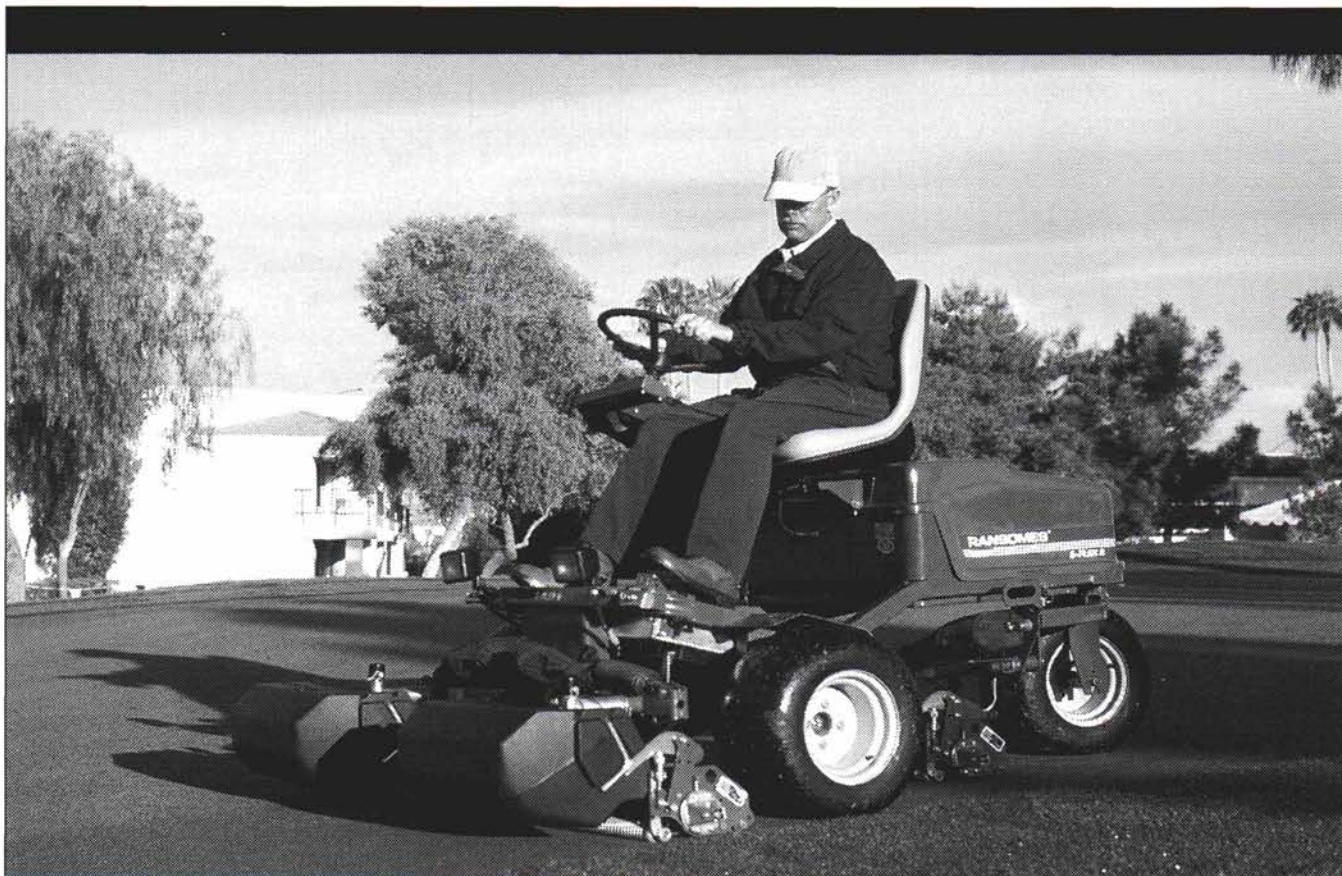
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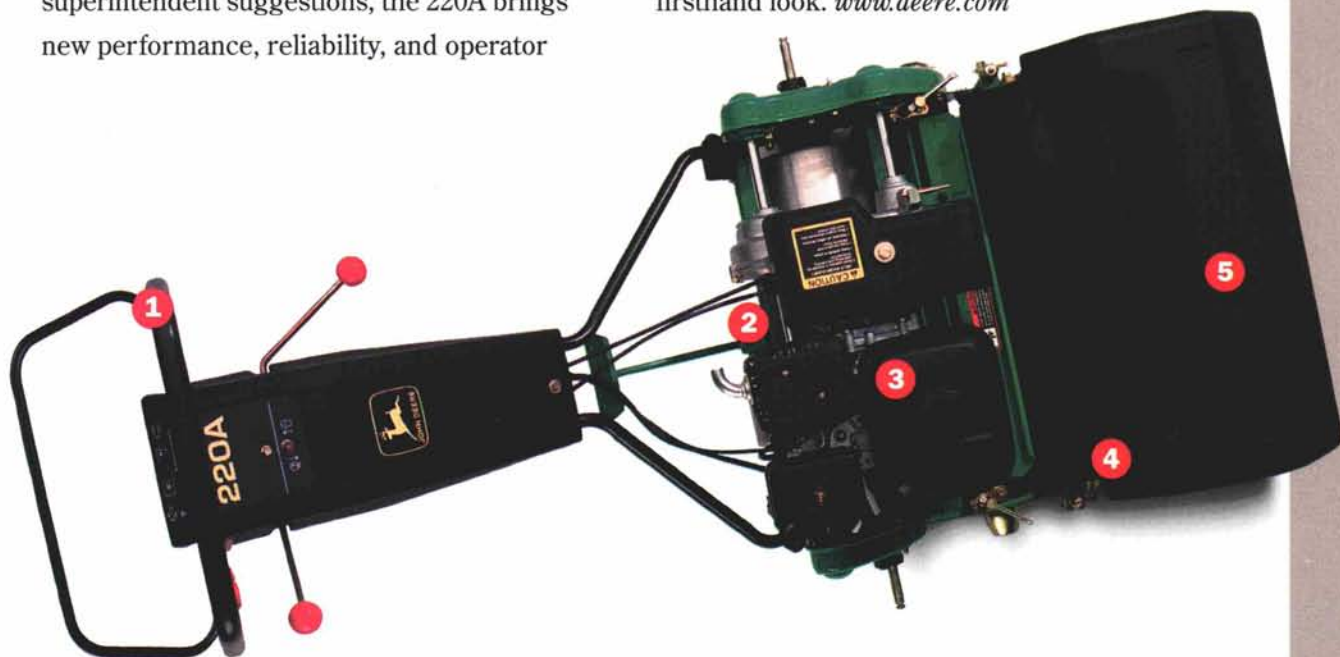
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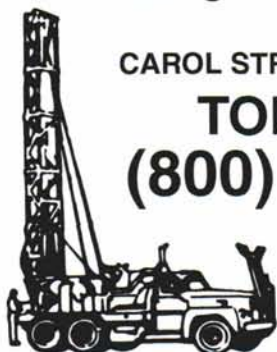
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If you have made continuing education a priority this winter, and if you would like to brush up on the finer points of managing turfgrass soils, consider enrolling in "Physical Problems of Turfgrass Soils: Identification and Correction." The GCSAA and MAGCS are joint hosts of the seminar, which will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, January 13-14, at the Oak Brook Hills Hotel and Resort in Oak Brook.

Instructors Robert N. Carrow, Ph.D., a professor of turfgrass science at the University of Georgia, and Paul E. Rieke, Ph.D., a professor of turfgrass management at Michigan State University, will focus on the "field problem oriented" approach to identifying problems, then delve into how to present management options.

Topics will include problems found in coarse- and fine-textured turfgrass soils, as well as soil modification, cultivation, topdressing, drainage techniques and more.

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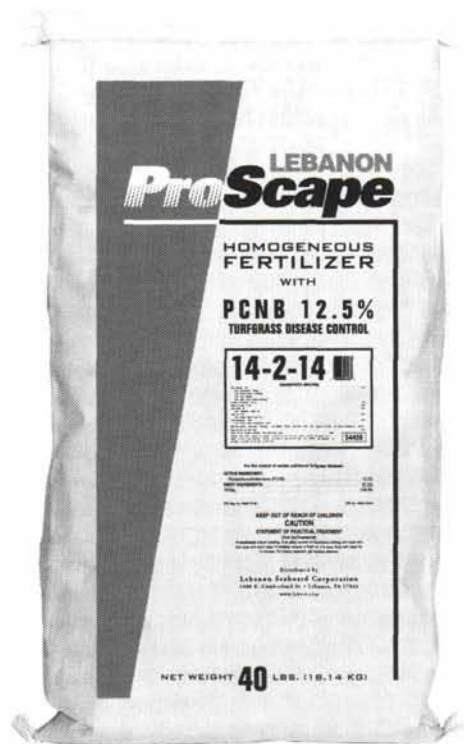


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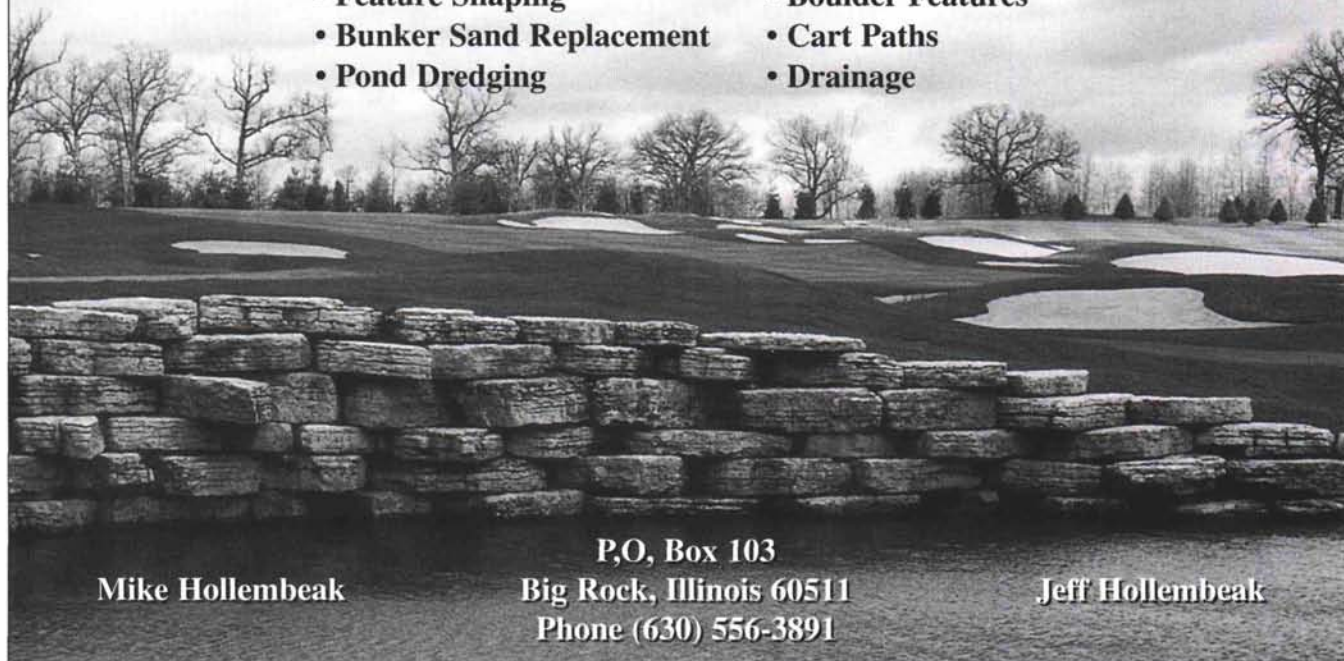
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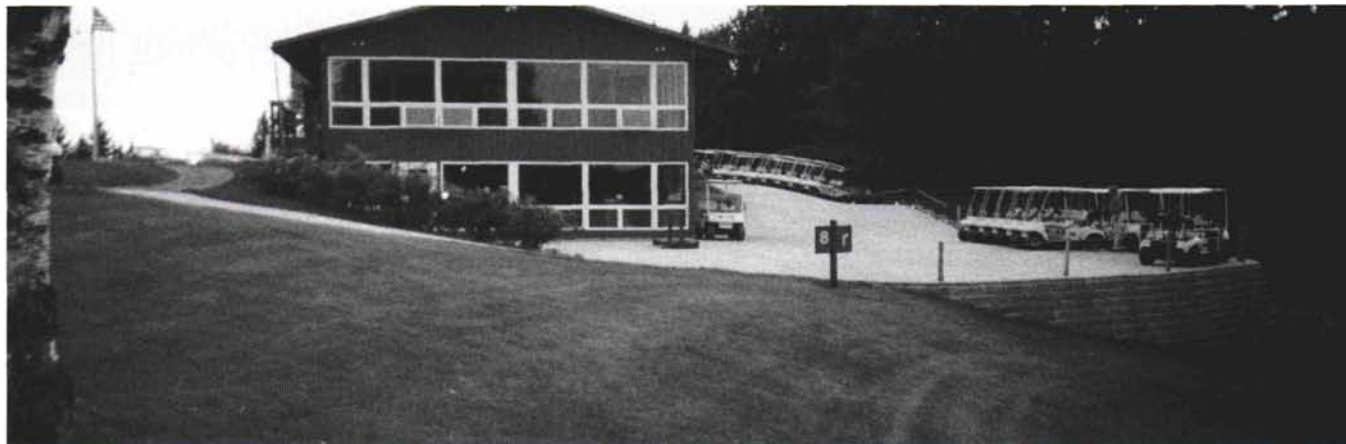


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Golf Course Ownership: It's Not All Luxurious and Fun!



The clubhouse at Spring Valley Golf Club in Spring Valley, Wisconsin, a small town located five miles off of I-94 between Eau Claire and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

*Mark Thibault
Ruffled Feathers G.C.*

Have you ever sat at your desk and wondered what it would be like to own your own golf facility? Isn't that just the ultimate goal? I once had the same dream.

When we were looking to buy a facility, we wanted it to be a family operation including my parents, myself, my wife and later, our children. While we searched and searched for a facility, I was the first assistant superintendent at Seven Bridges Golf Club under Don Ferreri. While at Seven Bridges, I was involved in the construction and grow-in phase, so I felt I had a good understanding of what it takes to have a championship facility and that I would translate this knowledge to the facility I would someday own. After I had spent five-and-a-half years as the first assistant at Seven Bridges, we finally purchased a facility in northwest Wisconsin.

Our facility had scenic terrain with a mixture of hardwoods

and pines lining every hole. The clubhouse was in desperate need of updating. It still had the late '60s/early '70s wagon wheel lights, dirty carpet, dark paint and wallpaper. Needless to say, I was busy being Bob Vila during the

*The clubhouse
was in desperate
need of updating.
It still had the
late '60s/early '70s
wagon wheel lights,
dirty carpet,
dark paint
and wallpaper.*

first four months before opening. The course was in about the same condition. All of the equipment rarely had maintenance done to it, and boy, did it show. (Band-Aids and bubble gum only work so long for equipment repairs.)

Most of the equipment would probably have fit into a two-car garage, but it was a start. So our first order of business was to talk to equipment vendors and see what they had to offer.

As opening day of the 1996 golf season drew closer, the snow just kept falling and falling. I figured that since this was northern Wisconsin, not Chicagoland, the opening of the golf season would be later by a week or two—NOT! The end of March brought in a freak winter snowstorm that dropped a foot-and-a-half of snow and pushed opening day back three weeks on the front nine and four weeks on the back nine. It was amazing. I never realized how much money bad weather cost golf facilities until it was mine taking the hit. Bank notes, leases, payroll, payroll taxes, chemical and fertilizer bills, maintenance and repair of equipment, food for the restaurant and electricity, all came out of the same checkbook. Needless to say, the checkbook was mighty thin for a while until we finally opened.