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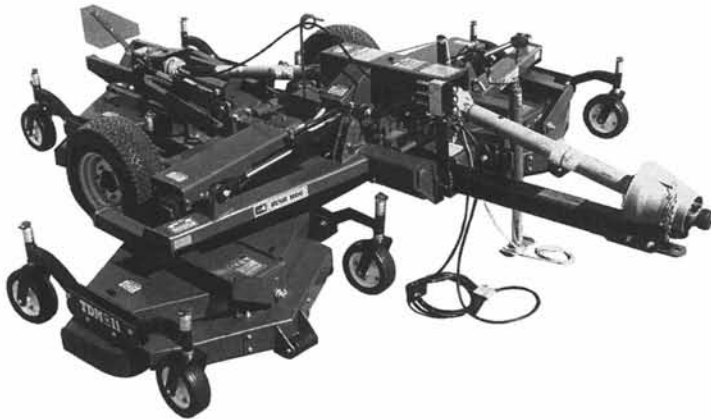
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John Gurke

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.



Beyond The Boundaries: The Benefits of Golf

Harborside International in Chicago is an example of a golf course that transformed an industrial waste site into an environmental treasure, with positive recreation, economic and social ramifications for the area.

Photo credit, Wm. Daniels

Greg Martin

In the eyes of many, golf is a game of the rich, a sport of the privileged and a phenomenon of the 20th century. Golf is seen as a sport of dubious distinction: an elitist game played in lush and secured communities, far removed from the distress of our culture. Perceived as a waste of time, a waste of money or a waste of land, golf is seemingly excessive.

This image is too bad, because golf is a great game in the minds of those of us who

play the game. While golf may appear extravagant, the cultural and environmental benefits of golf are significant.

Few sports offer what golf can provide. Golf is a sport that brings man and nature together. The game is endlessly interesting to the mind, senses and spirit. Viewed in a larger context, the game benefits more than just those who play. Golf has a host of advantages; its benefits can be felt far beyond the boundaries of the golf course.

First, golf is a great game.

Golf is a great game. Golf

requires focus and allows for reflection; it demands ability, but not brute strength; it is a solitary game that secures the deepest friendships; it provides fair competition for the less able; it illustrates a man's character, even when the game is unbearable. Golf requires a degree of patience and an ability to understand personal strengths and weaknesses. It is a sport that can grant good luck as well as render bad breaks. Golf provides character-building because of its ability to develop individuals who understand the bad breaks of life or, as some say, "the rub of the green." Golfers value perseverance

and persistence, and they discern fair play and distinguish a positive environmental experience.

Golf is, in its most basic form, man against nature. The intrigue of the game is our instinct to compete against the forces of physics, nature and ourselves to conquer our limitations. There has never been a perfect round of golf; the laws of nature will not permit it. So we continue to chase the butterfly or try to catch the

big one. Golf is transfixing, addicting, stupefying and wondrous all at the same time.

Golf has a history of distinction, characters and color. But there are other aspects of the game that are equally intriguing. Those of us who play understand that golf is a great game. And when seen in a larger cultural framework, the game of golf and its playing field are nothing less than a cultural remedy, enriching

not only those who play and work within the confines of a golf course, but also those who don't immediately appreciate golf's benefits. Golf has great restorative powers that transcend the boundaries of a golf course.

Second, golf courses are an environmental asset.

The overall environmental benefits of golf far outweigh its negative impacts, and those bene-

(continued on page 20)



Photo credit, Village Links of Glen Ellyn

Golf courses can buffer detrimental development from sensitive microenvironments, like the wetlands this frog calls home.


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Bob Maibusch, CGCS, MG
Hinsdale G.C.

The longer I am in this business, the more I realize that there are very few black-and-white issues. By this, I mean that there are valid and conflicting viewpoints on almost any subject related to golf course management.

For instance, locally and nationally, superintendents' associations are frequently asked to take a strong stand on management companies. The requests come from individuals who have had negative experiences with one or more of the companies or are currently feeling threatened by them. Valid reasons exist for being critical of management companies. We all know several people in the business who have been treated unfairly or unethically by one. However, it would be unfair to categorize all management companies as bad. I know of instances when a management company actually improved a superintendent's position by recognizing the deficiencies that he had been forced to deal with and making changes in the operation of the facility to assist the superintendent in improving conditions.

I have also talked to several superintendents working for management companies who felt confident that they would not be held responsible for less-than-ideal golf course conditions when those conditions were caused by factors outside of their influence. They feel that the experience of the principal players in their management companies prepares them to understand the difficulties encountered by superintendents, in that the principals can objectively assess a given operation and discern between what may be an unfortunate set of circumstances and incompetence.

Some superintendents also believe that management companies allow them opportunities that they would not find in other segments of the business. The opportunity to move up the management ladder to a regional or national supervisory position appeals to them.

Unfortunately, though, the prevailing sentiment among superintendents who have management company experience is negative. Lower wages are commonplace. This traces back to the reason that management companies exist: to enhance their bottom lines. As much as they talk about commitment to quality, many management companies will only deliver as good of a product as they can get away with and still turn a generous profit. This creates a frustrating situation for golf course superintendents who have been trained to deliver the best conditions they can. It also affects the individual golf course superintendent's future: a superintendent might not be seriously considered for a better position at another club because the golf course he currently manages has a reputation as being only mediocre in quality and he has no power to affect positive change there.

Another complaint is that promises of opportunity to move up the management ladder are rarely fulfilled. It seems that companies frequently give upper-level management positions to clubhouse managers or golf professionals because of the prevailing mindset that these individuals manage the companies' "profit centers," while the superintendents manage debit centers. In fact, we know that we manage the true profit center of our facilities. If you do not agree with that, then drive past a golf course when it is 40 degrees, raining and windy and count the number of cars in the parking lot. Time and again, golfer surveys have indicated that there are plenty of places to buy a hamburger or golf shirt, but only one place to play their favorite golf course. Golfers have also proven that they will travel considerable distances and pay top dollar to play a well-maintained golf course.

I am practical enough to know that management companies are here to stay. They do fill a need in many situations. In fact, I believe they will run in cycles and continue to grow in influence before we see a leveling off and eventually a decline in them due to competition and diminished profit margins. I do not think that they will ever take over the majority of facilities, particularly private ones, because they cannot deliver the same level of quality at a reasonable price that clubs with active, interested members or oversight committees can do for themselves.



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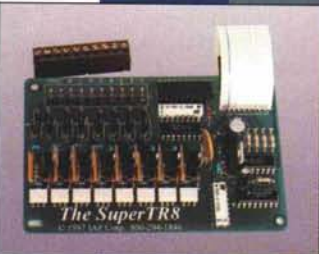
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Luke Strojny


April showers bring May flowers. I am writing my column during the last week of the rainiest April I've ever seen. It seems that all my staff has done in the last three weeks is push the sand in the bunkers and pump water. The turf suddenly developed a mind of its own and wants to be mowed every hour that it's not under water. In addition, my staff and I have many capital projects to finish, plus learn how to operate our new irrigation system that was installed last fall. Needless to say, we all have had a very busy spring.

So what am I getting at? TIME. The commodity that no one ever has enough of. How many of us have ever said, "I wish I had time to do this or that." I know I have. As turfgrass managers, our time is as valuable as a sunny 70° day with low humidity and a quarter-inch of precipitation forecast every third day and a staff of 300 trained employees. I am constantly fighting a battle of not having enough time. There are 24 hours in a day and between work, family and anything else you may be into, that time is used up very quickly.

I attended Bruce Williams' "Time Management" seminar in Orlando this year. Bruce has many ideas on how we can be better time managers. Although I don't agree with all of his ideas, I have tried to implement some of them, such as the use of technology like two-way radios, cell phones and fax machines to save time. Develop written goals and prioritize them. This will give you a game plan to follow. Write goals for the season; involve the pro, manager, green chairman or board when writing your goals. It may save you time and aggravation if everyone knows and understands the game plan. Learn how to say "no." There are tactful ways to do this, like, "I would be happy to unload your truckload of range balls, Mr. Golf Pro, but I will not be able to mow the range tee before your next lesson." Chances are, Mr. Golf Pro will want you to do both at the same time, but at least he now

knows that if he wants the balls unloaded, he might not get the range tee mowed. Learn how to say "no" tactfully and it will save you time. The point to all of this is that while you cannot add more hours to a day, you can use the hours you have more productively and wisely.

Speaking of time: it is time you hosted a MAGCS meeting. We are looking for sites for the year 2000. The months of July, August, September and October are still open. Please contact me if you are interested in hosting a meeting.

As arrangement chairman, I would like to personally thank all of the 1999 host superintendents for volunteering their courses. As always, the commercial sponsors are appreciated. Their generosity helps defray the cost of our meetings. 

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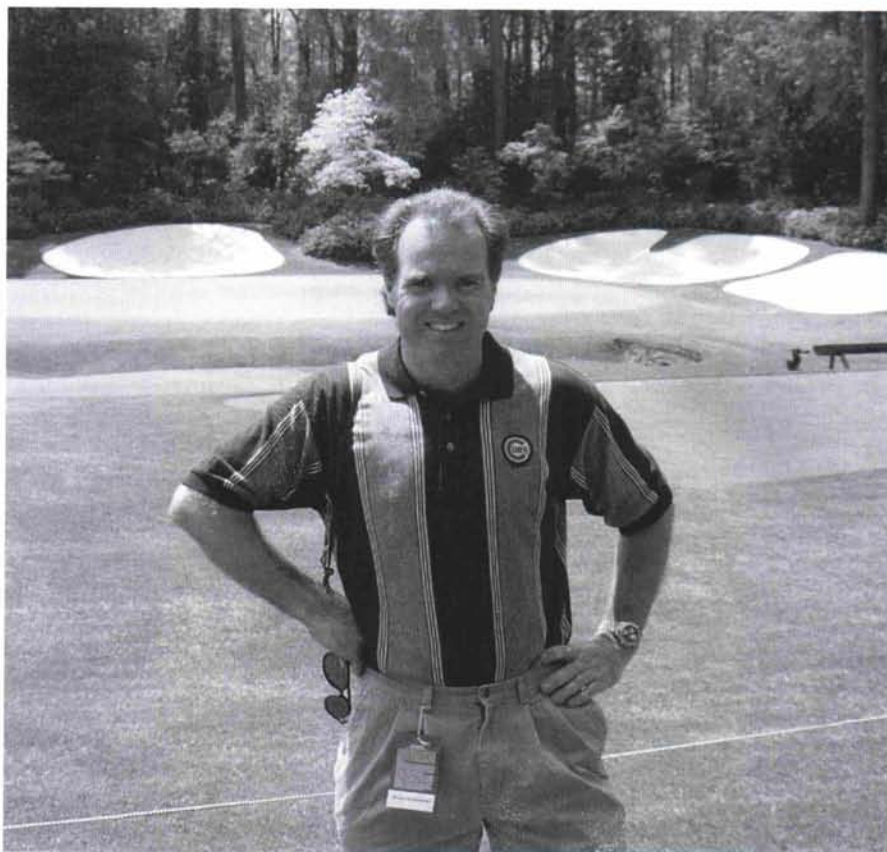


Randy Kane

Doug Davis has been the superintendent at Broken Arrow Golf Club since April of 1995, having joined the management team there as the course was nearing completion. Doug hails from a small town in eastern Iowa (near the Quad Cities), he is currently single, and most of his family remains in Iowa.

Doug followed a somewhat circuitous route to land at Broken Arrow, since he originally entered college at the University of Iowa as a classical music/fine arts major. While in college, Doug worked as a summer laborer at Clinton (IA) Country Club, and later at Finkbine Golf Course, which is the highly rated University course in Iowa City. Once Doug decided to make golf turf his career choice, he moved to the Hawkeye Institute of Technology

(continued on page 12)



Doug Davis at the Masters.



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