

And the Survey Says . . .

Editor's Note: Earlier this year, all class A, B, C and E members of the MAGCS received the 2000 MAGCS Survey. Nearly 51% of survey recipients returned completed surveys—a very respectable, and statistically valid, response rate. In recent issues of On Course, MAGCS president Don Ferreri has alluded to survey results in columns pertaining to the Midwest Golf House Complex at Cog Hill and proposed changes to the dues structure. The following article highlights results of the general section of the 2000 MAGCS Survey; to obtain a detailed copy of survey results, contact George Minnis at 630-406-5356. The MAGCS heartily thanks Mike O'Neill of Master of the Links, Inc., who donated time and money towards the preparation of a beautifully formatted final report on the tabulated survey results.

Some 90% of respondents supported the presence of educational speakers at meetings, although the 10% who did not were a vocal minority. Commented one respondent, "Superintendent interaction is more valuable." Said another, "I learn more in discussions with other superintendents, although I enjoy education at non-golf sessions."

In completing the 2000 MAGCS Survey, class A, B, C and E members responded to a general section, then proceeded to a special section customized to membership class. Of the 288 surveys returned, 170 came from class A/B members, 40 from class C members and 78 from class E members. The general section revealed that a majority of respondents—almost 30%—had been Midwest members for four-nine years. Another 23% tallied 10-15 years of membership. More than half of respondents boasted 10+ years of membership. By and large, this is a veteran group. Geographic representation among respondents was diverse. Some 43.7% of respondents characterized their club/company as being located "west," 35.9% said "north" and 16.7% said "south." Not surprisingly (given Lake Michigan), only 3.7% said their home base was "east" or "other."

Meetings/Outings

Responses varied widely to the question, "During the past year, how many MAGCS monthly meetings/outings have you attended?" Nearly 14% said "0," with 12.6%, 16.8%, 13.7% and 13% answering, respectively, one, two, three or four. Almost 20% of respondents attended five or six meetings over the past year. Most members, it seems, attend at least one meeting per year, and a substantial group of members frequently attends meetings.

More than half (55%) of respondents claimed their meeting attendance compared to past years has held steady. However, almost 28% said their attendance has decreased. By and large, to the tune of 82.4%, members' employers assume monthly meeting expenses. Another 8.4% of employers partially pick up the tab. Related to outing prices, nearly 89% of respondents felt that the current cost of these meetings was fair; opinion was split regarding the highest price respondents would pay for the monthly golf outing. Nearly 21% would max out at \$50-65, another

(continued on page 32)

28.8% said \$66-75, while 30.6% answered "\$96+."

Regarding meeting format, 67% of respondents said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the structure, with another 29% weighing in as neutral or expressing no opinion. "What about increasing the educational time and awarding credit toward the PDI?" commented one respondent. "Well-organized and a good mix of social and education/meeting time," voiced another respondent.

Some 90% of respondents supported the presence of educational speakers at meetings, although the 10% who did not were a vocal minority. Commented one respondent, "Superintendent interaction is more valuable." Said another, "I learn more in discussions with other superintendents, although I enjoy education at non-golf sessions."

The majority (58.4%) wanted education prior to golf (another 22.3% had no opinion in the matter). Said one respondent, "I think that the golf outings are very well-planned. We need to fit the education in when everyone is fresh and paying attention."

Some 67% of respondents agreed with the current program of cosponsoring the October golf meeting with the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation in support of turf research; another 25% were neutral on the topic. Regarding whether the MAGCS should continue to offer social events (e.g., Kane County Cougars outing, dinner dance, etc.) outside of monthly meetings, a whopping 92.3% said yes. "A good opportunity to socialize with other members and their families," commented one respondent. "The offer of alternate social events can never hurt," said another.

Midwest Golf House Complex at Cog Hill

In deciding to go forward with establishing a presence at the forthcoming Midwest Golf House Complex, members of the Board of Directors acted upon a wealth of information and support manifest in survey results. A mere 7.4% of respondents felt the MAGCS should not consider joining the CDGA, IJGA, WGA and other prominent golf industry organizations at Cog Hill. One respondent wondered, "What would be the cost in doing so?" (The answer to this question, apparently, is that the cost will be relatively nominal.)

Scholarships

Nearly 44% of respondents said they had at least one child who would attend college within the next 10 years. Some 26.4% had two or three children who fit the bill. Not surprisingly, then, 63.2% of respondents felt the MAGCS should offer a college scholarship, with 16.8% saying "no." "The MAGCS should emphasize education," said one respondent. Commented another, "There seems to be an abundance of people looking for a superintendent's job. More scholarships will deflate the value of sitting superintendents." (Do take note that the MAGCS scholarship is not tied to any particular field of study. The scholarship is intended for the children of members who are good students and present with financial needs.)

Internet Usage

Internet reliance among MAGCS members is still far from universal, survey results suggest. Only 15% of respondents favored receiving MAGCS announcements via e-mail; 65.4% preferred "snail mail," while 20% had no preference. Interestingly, however, only 7.4% of respondents said they did not have Internet access. Almost 54% had used the MAGCS Web site (magcs.org); another 38.7%

Nearly 82% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the current MAGCS Board of Directors (17.2% had no opinion), while 86.1% felt that the MAGCS adequately served their needs (9.3% had no opinion). A substantial 67% said they would support a dues increase if it were necessary for the Midwest to continue operating at current standards; however, nearly 20% said they would not support such an increase (13% had no opinion).

had not. Among those who accessed the MAGCS Web site, 31.8% used the site primarily from home, 38.2% primarily from the office/golf course and 30% weighed in with "both equally."

Several respondents proposing changes to the Web site commented, "Get rid of passwords." Another wanted to see "links to commercial Web sites and other industry Web sites." "No changes, just more participation on the message board," voiced another.

Hospitality

The MAGCS hospitality room at the GCSAA national meeting is a conference highlight for many

(continued on page 34)

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members. Some 68% of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the hospitality room (21.8% had never attended). “Best in the nation! Way to go!” enthused one respondent. “Members and especially the Board should mingle and make others that don’t attend so often feel welcome,” commented another. “Nice job, guys! Keep up the great work!” said another respondent. “Have it at a restaurant/bar—rent the place,” suggested one respondent.

The hospitality room is an expensive undertaking, sponsored jointly by the MAGCS and generous vendors. Regarding what percentage of the hospitality room’s cost the MAGCS should absorb, 12.9% of respondents said 1-10%, 15.3% answered 21-30% and 8.6% answered 91%+. A substantial 42.3% said the MAGCS should support 41-50% of the expense.

Dues Structure


Nearly 82% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the current MAGCS Board of Directors

(17.2% had no opinion), while 86.1% felt that the MAGCS adequately served their needs (9.3% had no opinion). A substantial 67% said they would support a dues increase if it were necessary for the Midwest to continue operating at current standards; however, nearly 20% said they would not support such an increase (13% had no opinion). “How much [of an increase]?” wondered one respondent. “I would have a hard time selling an increase to my board,” commented another.

Regarding how often the MAGCS should analyze its costs and dues structure, a majority of respondents, 68.4%, answered “every three years.” Nearly 29% felt that every year was valid. Some 22.6% had no opinion. Said one respondent, “We all know from preparing our own budgets that there are cost increases every year. Build in some kind of long-term annual increases to compensate!” Commented another respondent, “Continual evaluation of the chapter’s expenses will allow for

annual evaluation of current revenue from dues.”

On Course

Some 90% of respondents expressed that they were very satisfied (65.8%) or somewhat satisfied (24.2%) with the current format of *On Course*. “Newsworthy and informative,” commented one respondent. Said another, “The 30-day deadline is too long; articles in summer are not timely. The flashy style as compared with the old *Bull Sheet* appears to be cosmetic.” The opinion of another respondent: “I don’t like the continuation of the articles to the back pages. I would like the articles to go from one page to the next.” (As a monthly publication, *On Course* already adheres to an extremely tight production cycle, but we are always striving to be more timely. Continuation of articles is often a layout necessity AND has the added benefit of allowing us to intermingle editorial and advertising content—our loyal advertisers support the production costs of this magazine.) 


On Course With the President (continued from page 2)

contrary to what I previously stated, it might be the most important—is **respect**. We all know what respect means, but it is the one value that grows upon itself. There is no doubt that to earn respect from others you must first respect those around you. I do not take these five words lightly; I find if I constantly remind myself of who I want to be, it is readily obtainable.

I know I can rely on my crew to a man. I count on their loyalty, pride and respect daily. This did not occur overnight; it took, and still requires, leading by example and showing respect in return to them and their families. I admire the work and family ethics of my grounds crew and find it disturbing to notice a lack of these values in individuals who have been given many more

opportunities than they might have received. I have brought up this question of our character because we need this foundation to build strong communication. And yes, strong communication is essential for change to occur.

The MAGCS Board of Directors has instituted many changes over the past few years. I feel that we have executed very good decisions because our character has been in order. The changes that have occurred in every situation have been made in the best interests of you, the members. I am always available to answer questions, field concerns or listen to criticism. Keep in mind that I will evaluate my character and would like you to do the same. I have enjoyed working

with the MAGCS Board during these past eight years. I can assure you that I, like the rest of the Board of Directors, am here to improve and contribute to the betterment of our Association. There are no hidden agendas, only the desire to do a good job, a job to take pride in. Serving can be a very thankless task at times, but it is one we choose to do—with integrity and honesty, showing loyalty to the Association’s heritage and respect for its future. So, how did I handle change this year? I think quite well, and I hope you all agree. If indeed the words of one of my boyhood heroes are true, and “nice guys finish last,” then I say to you, Leo: I don’t mind if I finish last. God bless. 

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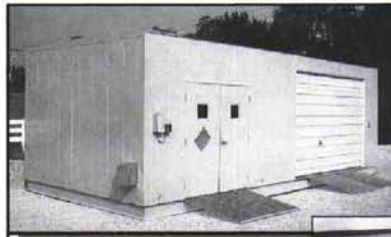


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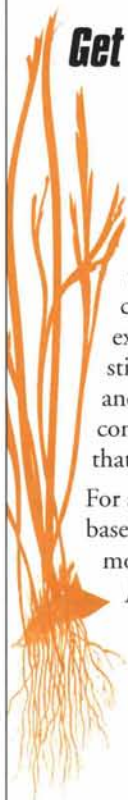
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John Gurke, CGCS
Contributing Editor

DATES TO REMEMBER

October 10 — ITF Fall Golf Day at Gleneagles Country Club, **Keith Fuchs** host.

October 19 — University of Illinois Turf Alumni Golf Outing, Olympia Fields Country Club, **Dave Ward**, CGCS host.

October 26 — GCSAA's "Managing On The Job Behavior" seminar (0.7 CEUs) in Rockford, IL.

October 30-31 — Illinois Arborist Association's 18th Annual Seminar/Trade Show at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL—more info to follow.

November 9 — MAGCS 48th Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting at Medinah Country Club, **Dan Quast**, CGCS host.

November 29 — Second Annual U of I Alumni Breakfast at NCTE.

January 17-18, 2001 — GCSAA's "Managing People For Peak Performance and Job Satisfaction" seminar (1.4 CEUs) in Oak Brook, IL.

Congratulations to **Dave** (Junior) **Braasch** of Hughes Creek Golf Club, whose June feature article, titled "Be a Lifesaver! Basic Medical Procedures You Should Know," was reprinted in the August issue of *The Green*

Breeze—the publication of the Greater Cincinnati Golf Course Superintendents Association. It's always nice to see our members—ESPECIALLY those who contribute to this magazine—published elsewhere. *Green Breeze* previously has reprinted articles originally seen in *On Course* by **Don Ferreri** of Seven Bridges Golf Club and **Mike Mumper**, CGCS of Park Ridge Country Club. Your dedication to this association and its publication are being recognized, guys.

Paul Voykin of Briarwood Country Club, featured in September's "Ask the 'Expert'" column so eloquently penned by **Brad Anderson** of Midlane Country Club, recently gave a presentation on the importance and value of teamwork in an organization in—of all places—Acapulco, Mexico. Most of us are happy to be invited to O'Hare In-Focus for a market research panel discussion.

As mentioned in Dates to Remember, the Illinois Arborist Association's 18th Annual Seminar/Trade Show will be held at the end of this month at Pheasant Run in St. Charles (home of the NCTE). The two-day conference will feature numerous talks by noted experts in the field of arboriculture, sessions for the new tree worker certification (also in Spanish), and an expanded trade show (from the previous 6,000 square feet to 33,750 square feet). Contact April Toney toll free at 877-617-8887 for details.

Listen up, all you Penn Staters—you now have a Web site for turf program information. The site contains educational program information, research reports, outreach activities, and faculty, staff, and graduate student contact information. The address is turf.cas.psu.edu/.

A newly published bulletin, entitled *Factors Affecting Green Speed*, is now available to golf course managers and golfers alike. The four-color publication by the Ohio State University and Penn State University covers management practices that affect ball roll on putting greens. Written by Patty Sweeney, George Hamilton (great smile, always tan) and Karl Danneberger, it is available FREE by contacting your USGA Green Section office.

The 2000 GCSAA Legacy Award winners have been announced, and among them is Sean A. Mogle, the grandson of **John C. Ebel**, retired golf course superintendent from Barrington Hills Country Club. Sean attends the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana majoring in comparative literature and economics. Congratulations to both Sean and proud grandpa John.

MAGCS sends out its deepest condolences to **Brian Green**, CGCS of Sunset Valley Golf Club and his family on the loss of Brian's mother.

Congratulations to **Verlyn Strellner**, CGCS of Glencoe Golf Club, who took advantage of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund's early retirement incentive and did just that after 30 years of contributing to the fund. Word on the street has it that Verlyn will embark on a second career with the World Wrestling Federation's fledgling Senior Tour. Best of luck to you

(continued on page 40)



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The August 22 MAGCS meeting at White Deer Run (Joseph Meier host) turned out wonderfully from every aspect. To start things off, the well-attended education portion of the event featured Dr. Don Hey, who gave a very enlightening talk on wetlands and their roles in golf courses. Dr. Hey provided some very interesting history of our area, including specifics on the vast populations of beaver that once inhabited it (you don't miss them 'til after they're gone). The golf event—the annual college championship—was bitterly fought to the end (and bitterly disputed afterward), and found a couple of “new kids on the block” taking honors: First place went to the team from Michigan State (Chad

Ball, CGCS, Conway Farms G.C.; Paul Bastron, CGCS, Glen Flora C.C.; Scott Armstrong, Conserv FS; and Brad Krolik, Mistwood G.C.). Second place was nabbed by newcomer Joliet Junior College (Rich Daly, Water Management and Design; Don Ferreri, Seven Bridges G.C.; Jeff Smith, Springbrook G.C.; and Dave Gelino, Seven Bridges G.C.). Third place was occupied by the team from Penn State, whose team of Greg Coyne, Kankakee C.C.; Jay Druhan, Palos Hills Municipal G.C.; Mike Sauls, CGCS, Butler National G.C.; and Dave Louttit, Scotts, barely squeaked by always-the-bridesmaid-never-the-bride Illinois (Randy Wahler, CGCS, Knollwood Club; Al Pondel, CGCS, Deerfield G.C.; Carl Hoppfan, ITF; and Tom Healy, Layne-Western). After golf—and a slight rain delay—we were treated to an outstanding array of food, compliments of Chef Victor. I doubt many attendees ate dinner once they got home . . . MAGCS thanks Joe Meier and his grounds staff for a great course, and White

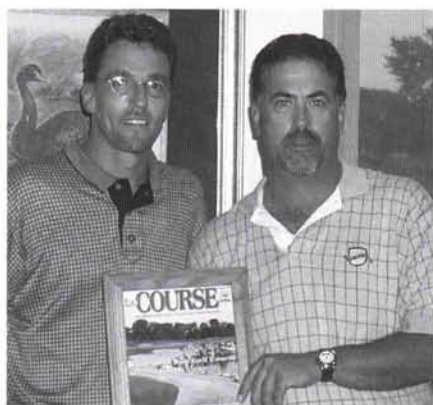
Deer Run for its wonderful hospitality throughout the event—great job, folks!

Lastly, there is nothing new to report about Oscar Miles, CGCS, Merit Club...

For those of you into turf IPM and the Internet, check out www.InteractiveTurf.com, which is now up and running while under construction. InteractiveTurf is the pest-monitoring/forecasting program being developed by Drs. Hank Wilkinson at the U of I and Randy Kane of the CDGA. Also, watch your mail/e-mail for program updates and subscription information for fiscal 2001.

Steve Partyka at White Pines Golf Course has about 700 Toro irrigation heads for sale at \$20 apiece. All 650s, 670s, and 690s are in good condition. Also for sale are two Gould pumps and two Worthington pumps and motors. Call Steve at 630-766-9579 for details.

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Host Joe Meier receives the treasured framed On Course cover from yours truly, John Gurke. Side note: You, too can have one of these things—just host a meeting!



Chef Victor and food and beverage manager Chrissi pulled out all the stops, including this beautiful ice sculpture of the MAGCS logo.