

Linking Our Past to Our Future

To the Proud Members of the MAGCS:

From April through November of this year, each issue of *On Course* highlighted a specific decade in our Association's history. Rather than trump the outstanding work of the Editorial Committee members who authored those installments by condensing and rehashing that content in this special commemorative issue, we instead offer our readers a sampling of material from other sources. In these pages, you'll find the perspective of our national organization, GCSAA, which is also marking its diamond anniversary this year, and the reflections of our past president Mike Bavier on the Association's future. You'll find a reprint of the fine article penned by *Sun-Times* golf writer Len Ziehm that appeared in a recent issue of *Chicago District Golfer*. Interspersed with these articles, we feature a photo gallery of notable Midwest personalities.

One further thought: a careful examination of the "Decades" series reveals that the history of the golf industry, and the green-keeping profession, is inextricably linked to world history. For example, the advent of television and specifically, televised golf, resulted in surging demand for access to the game, a plethora of new golf courses and many more opportu-




Can you identify these four superintendents? Hint: one of them is the editor's father, and one was a former salesman at George A. Davis. See answer below.

nities for superintendents. Increasing environmental consciousness translated to heightened awareness of golf's impact on the environment and enhanced responsibility with respect to the application of chemicals and cultivation of natural areas. During times of prosperity, golf likewise enjoyed a boom; with economic downturns, golf's growth stagnated.

Drawing the connection between our industry and the larger context of American and world history demands that the members of the Midwest embark on the next 75 years with a renewed determination . . . a determination to excel not only in a chosen profession, but also in the role of world citizens. The horrific events of September 11 drove home the point that we are

all connected. Our Association's bright future—and the promising future of your profession—are tied to the future of the country we love and the planet we call home. The sense of community and camaraderie afforded by this Association is perhaps more important now than ever. Extending that sense of kinship to forge stronger connections with family, church, country and world is the new mandate.

The warmest congratulations to the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents on this auspicious occasion, both 75th birthday and diamond jubilee. May the preceding 75 years of friendship, education and support give rise to many more. And, as our Association grows and moves forward, may it stay always "on course." 

Answer: (L to R) Len Schnepf, Phil Versin, Tim Miles and Dave Meyer in 1971.

A Diamond in the Rough



Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the November-December 2001 issue of Chicago District Golfer and appears here with permission of the Chicago District Golf Association (CDGA).

This was a monumental year for the Chicago District Golf Association, with the opening of Midwest Golf House.

It's also a milestone moment for the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), one of the first allied associations to join the CDGA's venture. The MAGCS is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

Incorporated on Christmas Eve, 1926, the MAGCS—originally founded as the Midwest Greenkeeper's Association—saved its formal celebration for its annual fall dinner-dance, held October 20 at MAGCS President Brian Bossert's home course, Bryn Mawr Country Club.

In the meantime, the MAGCS had commissioned a 75th Anniversary Committee, chaired by President Emeritus Don Ferreri of Seven Bridges, and has been featuring the association's rich history in its monthly magazine, *On Course*. A regular column, "The Way We Were,"

debuted in January; the April through November issues of *On Course* each spotlighted a decade in MAGCS history.

Indeed, this group's history is most worth telling. Superintendents have typically been the most forgotten people in the golf business, but the game couldn't survive without them.



The first 60 greenkeepers—a group that included one woman—gather at the Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, Ohio to found what today is the GCSAA.

Given the 18th-century origins of the game of golf, it's hardly surprising that golf course superintendents existed long before the formation of the MAGCS. They just weren't called superintendents then. In fact, these pioneers did just about everything entailed in the opera-

tion of a golf facility, and it wasn't easy. They endured the hardships of long, irregular working hours and their "offices"—even as late as the 1960s—were unheated barns without plumbing facilities. Pails of sand served as bathrooms.

Now, of course, all that has changed. Most clubs operate with a management triumvirate—a club manager, a golf professional and a course superintendent. Of those three, the superintendent is in many cases the best educated. It's time to give these professionals their due.

The Advent of the Pro-Greenkeeper

The superintendent's evolution is inseparable from golf's evolution. As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, most courses had square-shaped greens and were mowed with hand-pushed mowers. Horse manure was the fertilizer du jour. The early courses didn't have much mounding, as they were built with teams of horses or mules. Greens were mowed to 5/16", a far cry

from the 2/16" used most frequently today. Most courses had fescue grass in the fairways because it required little maintenance and no irrigation. In those distant days, all the work was done by hand; clubs retained a staff of four or five men to handle it. Now, of course, courses employ several times that number and maintenance rosters include specialized technicians to handle mechanical repairs, irrigation operations, chemical applications, floriculture, landscape maintenance and administration.

In the early years of Chicago golf, from 1895 until about 1912, course maintenance was handled by the golf professional. These early hybrids were called pro-greenkeepers, and most were from Scotland. Most noteworthy of this bunch was Jim Foulis of Wheaton's Chicago Golf Club, America's first 18-hole course. He wasn't just a pro-greenkeeper, though. He was

also the U.S. Open champion, at least in 1896 when he won that title at Shinnecock Hills in New York. Foulis' brother Dave served in a similar capacity at Onwentsia in Lake Forest. Bruce Herd, who held the dual role at Flossmoor, was the early leader of the pro-greenkeepers on Chicago's South Side.



*Our founding father
John MacGregor.*

The evolution from pro-greenkeeper to superintendent is an intriguing one. As golf spread throughout Chicago, the green-keeping duties slipped out from under the golf professional's

umbrella. Those who wanted to build courses bought land from farmers, and many farmers became greenkeepers. Their ranks swelled with the arrival of "green-a-keepers"—men of Italian descent who had exceptional "green thumbs," if not the most impressive formal education. Many had been victimized by coal mine disasters in central Illinois and wanted to change professions.

A Family Business

The term "superintendent" emerged in the 1940s. Whatever the name—greenkeeper or superintendent—the profession became, and has remained, a family business. That's especially true in Chicago. Witness these family ties, as provided by Bob Williams, longtime superintendent at Highland Park's Bob O' Link C.C.: Bill Stupple was the early greenkeeper at Exmoor in Highland Park, and his brothers Bob and Alex were pros.

(continued on page 14)



NATURAL GRASS GROWN ON PLASTIC
Exclusively Grown in Illinois By
CENTRAL
Sod Farms, Inc.

1-800-310-0402

What do a superintendents think about RapidTurf. ?

"We've used RediPlay/RapidTurf on four different courses. Sodding 19 greens over a 2½ week period. Each of these greens was playable inside of two weeks. RediPlay/RapidTurf does not float like washed sod. And since there's no damage in cutting, it roots faster after installation. I highly recommend it!"
Tom Jauch
Vice-President GolfVision LLC

"It roots faster than any grass I've seen before. In fact, it began rooting withing two days of installation. We opened in half the normal time. It's great stuff!"
Lawrence Flament,
Stonewall Orchard Golf Club

Delivered throughout the Midwest by refrigerated truck

Gerald Dearie was the superintendent at Edgewater and Medinah, and his brother Eddie held the same job at Oak Park. Later, Gerald's son, also named Gerald, would become Medinah's superintendent. The second Gerald was stung by a wasp on the course shortly after taking the job and died a tragic death at age 27. Frank Dinelli was the superintendent at Northmoor, and his son Joe and grandson Dan worked at North Shore. Joe and Elmer Bertucci began at Exmoor, then moved on. Joe took on Knollwood and brother Elmer was at Old Elm. Their sons Adolph (Lake Shore) and Alfred (Old Elm) also became superintendents. Herman Woehrle worked at Ravisloe and Kankakee and son Ted was at Beverly and Lakeshore. And, of course, Bob and Bruce Williams, who lay claim to the distinction of being the only father-son team to serve as president of the MAGCS and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Bruce is now at Los Angeles Country Club.

The elder Williams can recount other family names prominent on the Chicago scene—Stewart, Stand, Saielli, Lapp, Coghill, Gee, Coutre, Gerber, Benson, Kronn, Fuchs, Gruening, Hopphan, Krueger, Meyer, Michael, Mastrole, Miles, Reed, Didier, Breen, Braunsky and Voykin. These names probably resonate with many members of the CDGA.

While the money may not have been great in the early days, job security often was. Glen View Club, for instance, has had a short list of greenkeepers since its incorporation as one of Chicago's first golf courses in 1897. The list includes John H. Duncan, Ed Haupt, Henry Lange, Bruce Sering and, now, Jeff Leuzinger.

Birth of the Mid-West Greenkeeper's Association

The first greenkeepers in these parts were very competitive, adverse to sharing information. That started to change in the 1920s, especially after the founding of the MAGCS. The movement to share knowledge for the common good began with John Morley, a greenkeeper from Youngstown, Ohio. He formed the National Association of Greenkeepers (now known as GCSAA) with the help of John MacGregor of Chicago Golf Club. MacGregor was one of the national group's directors when it originated a few months ahead of the MAGCS on September 26, 1926.

At Morley's behest, MacGregor started the Chicago chapter by writing to 500 greenkeepers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Wisconsin. The first meeting took place November 26, 1926, at the Great Northern Hotel in Chicago with 16 attending. Thirteen were from Illinois, and they soon formed the MAGCS with MacGregor the first president, Alex Binnie of Shoreacres as vice president and

Eddie Dearie of Ridgemoor and Shoreacres as secretary.

In March 1927, the Mid-West Greenkeeper's Association, forerunner of MAGCS, hosted its first national convention and in 1933, MacGregor became its first member to head the national body. He was followed by Ray Gerber (Glen Oak) in 1950 and a string of other MAGCS members who also went on to GCSAA presidency, among them the Williams duo, Roy Nelson of Ravisloe, Ted Woehrle of Beverly, Mike Bavier of Inverness, James Brandt of Danville and William Roberts of Knollwood.

Personalities and Innovations

The MAGCS, in fact, has nurtured personality and innovation throughout its illustrious history. Personality and innovation often go hand in hand, as with Bob Williams, who introduced "technical education" to the Chicago greenkeepers. He first worked on a course at the age of 12, at Bellaire Golf Club in Wauconda. It was a course his father started as part of a housing project. The course didn't survive, but Williams worked in the profession until his retirement from Bob O' Link in 1979. Eleven years later, he was the first superintendent elected to the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame. This October, Ray Gerber became the second.



Family ties abound in this industry. Here, the Dinellis (L to R): Dan, Joe, Frank and Jerry.



More family ties: past presidents of MAGCS and GCSAA, the only father-son duo to hold both offices, Bruce (L) and Bob Williams in 1988.

Williams wasn't the only superintendent with innovative ideas. In the early 1930s, Fred Krueger of Olympia Fields made a movie of his techniques with Gerber as commentator. The short-lived Mill Road Farm course in Lake Forest was the U.S. Golf Association's first involvement in turfgrass matters. Dr. John Monteith maintained an experimental turfgrass garden there in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Once the national and Midwest organizations were formed, the profession made rapid changes. Tight economic times provoked implementation of some unusual measures. Some courses used sheep instead of mowers to cut grass during World War II; snow fences surrounding greens were to prevent the sheep from grazing there, too. Golfers still had to watch where they stepped in the fairways and rough, however.


Practices became more sophisticated after those trying times. Automatic irrigation systems came first to private clubs, then—in the mid-1960s—to public layouts such as McHenry,



Dudley Smith, president of Midwest Regional Turf Foundation, 1973.

Deerpath and Sunset Valley. Computerization entered the business, too. About the only thing that hasn't changed is cup-cutting. The same tools used for that pur-

pose in golf's early days are still used now.

Superintendents, collectively and individually, are never content to rest on their laurels. Consider the success of the MAGCS; the group numbers more than 800 strong with representatives from over 250 courses and a like number of commercial enterprises in the Chicago area. Rather than merely toast its diamond jubilee, however, the MAGCS is looking ahead to the next 75 years, too. It has established a Long-Range Planning Committee, consisting of Fred Behnke (Mount Prospect G.C.), Mike Bavier (Inverness C.C.), Brian Bossert (Bryn Mawr C.C.), Jan Jarvis and Tony Kalina (Prairie Landing). Working under mandate by the Board of Directors, this group will lead the way in determining where this most dedicated group of individuals goes from here. 

COMPOST

Think of it as **REALLY GOOD** Topsoil

- that doesn't have weeds
- that contains about eight times the organic matter in topsoil
- that contains active families of beneficial microbes
- that contains useful micro-nutrients
- that's been used successfully by superintendents all over Chicagoland for improving turf, repairing divots, planting decorative beds, jumpstarting sod, transplanting shrubs and trees - and just about anywhere they need things to grow quickly and well

Available Year Around



GreenCycle Incorporated
400 Central Avenue, Suite 200
Northfield, Illinois 60093
847-441-6606

MAGCS – A Vision for the Future

Editor's Note: This year, On Course has devoted a lot of ink to looking back at the history of our Association. Now, as we begin the march to our Association's centennial, is a good time to start looking forward. This article is based upon Mike Bavier's presentation of the same name delivered at the 49th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah C.C. on November 7. A past president of the MAGCS (1975) and GCSAA (1981), Mike won GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award in 2000. He has been superintendent at Inverness C.C. for 32 years.

The Midwest Association has grown by leaps and bounds over the last 40 years. The membership has steadily increased and its leaders have been determined to create a strong and friendly association. The previous era of our Association is one that I will focus on. It should give you a feel of where we began, where we are now – and then, hopefully, explain where we might want to go. This is what I foresee happening in our Association over the next 50 years, to insure that the future of the Midwest Association remains as promising and powerful as its dedicated members.



Mike Bavier, former president of MAGCS and GCSAA, during the plaid jacket era.

Let's step back a bit – in order to see where we are going, we first need to know from where we started, many years ago.

My first memories of MAGCS go back to the '60s. We had at that time a secretary/treasurer, whose name was Roy Nelson. He recorded all the minutes, did the billing of dues, collected money and made deposits. He wrote all the Association checks and sent out all correspondence, including monthly notices of meetings. Oscar Miles followed Roy in this position. I then followed Oscar. This position required many hours of dedication. However, we only had about 200 members at that time, but all the work was done manually; billing was done on an addressograph machine. Dues were recorded in a book, certificates were stamped with a hand seal and signed by the secretary/treasurer and president. These were sent out with a sticker that could be placed on your car or truck, along with a wallet card. And back in those days, the minutes were read out loud at every meeting by the secretary/treasurer – no dispensing with the minutes in those days!

The Board met only a few times per year, and some of the meeting dates would correspond with the monthly meeting. Meetings were almost always held in conjunction with golf outings. Board members were just as hard to recruit then, as they are now. The secretary/treasurer office could be held for a number of years. And many times, it was

this position that held the Association together. Sometime in the early '70s, we hired a secretary to take the minutes and send out meeting notices.

After that, we really seemed to have arrived in the big leagues—the Midwest, once again, was recognized as one of the power chapters.

During those days, the businessman's lunch was very popular. It included lots of heavy drinking. The meetings tended to get a bit out of hand, and many of the superintendents refrained from holding them at their clubs because the meetings started to be disorderly and even rowdy. At one meeting at Beverly Country Club in the early '70s, chaos abounded. The president was trying to conduct a business meeting, and at least two or three side discussions were going on at the same time. The ones that were full of firewater wouldn't give the president the proper chance to conduct the meeting. Many of us were dismayed at what was happening. One of my guests at that meeting said that a good parliamentarian and strong pres-

ident would be needed to handle a meeting such as this. After discussion with some of the Board members, we agreed that things had to change. The next year, Paul Voykin was brought forth as president, and with much planning the meetings were set up with an agenda (which is still used today). The meetings now followed "Robert's Rules of Order," and a parliamentarian and sergeant-at-arms were installed. The crowd from the bar that always had the best ideas after a fistful of drinks, were told either to stay in the bar or attend the meetings with the understanding that they were only permitted to speak when allowed to rise and recognized by the president. If anyone was out of order, he would then be removed from the room by the sergeant-at-arms. This procedure applied to everyone in the room.

Ladies and gentlemen, big changes were occurring again. We were back on track.

Since this period of time, we have continued to grow and, like any other organization, we have had our ups and downs. Each



Albie Staudt still looks like this 1974 photo.

president along the way has had his own way of running the organization and his own vision, and rightfully so—that is why he was elected. In any event, for the next five, 10 or 20 years in the future, we will probably see even more changes, and at a faster pace, than we have seen in the last 20 years. Here, then, is one vision for the future.

Vision for the Future

- We need to recruit more Board members and make it so that those who are elected to serve also have time to perform their duties at their own clubs. This might be best accomplished by

(continued on page 18)



Flashback to 1962: back row (L to R) Ted Woehrle, Paul Voykin, Don Stewart, Bert Rost, Bill Brady; front row (L to R) Roy Nelson, Don Gerber, John Ebel, Warren Bidwell.

hiring more staff to perform the duties of running the Association. Selling the membership on this progressive and far-reaching idea will take some effort. The Midwest Association would become more in line with the national association. This past year, we wisely teamed up with the Chicago District Golf Association and secured office space in their Golf House. This was something our Association needed, a place to call home. Here, our staff will be able to perform the numerous time-consuming duties our Board requires on home turf.

- In the new millennium, the educational arm of our organization should continue to be one of the most important parts of our Association. We need to keep growing and expanding our vision. One important topic now, that will be for many years

in the future, is the ecologically sound preservation of nature on our golf courses. This, more than likely, will be accomplished



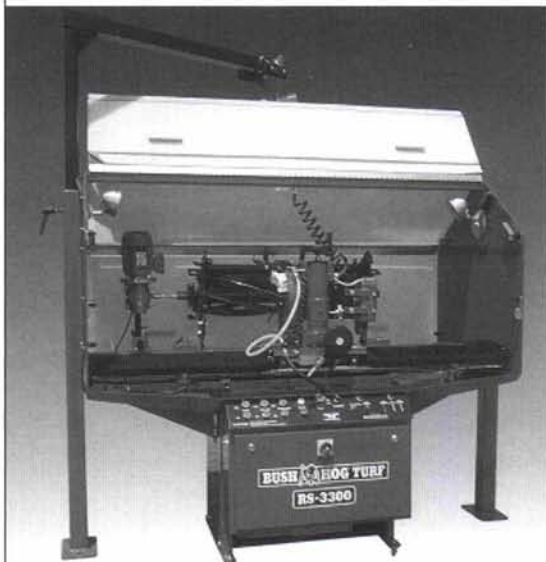
Can you identify this cute couple?

through Audubon International and other organizations, including the GCSAA, which offers courses and seminars on these topics. Such education can also be accomplished on the regional level via workshops taught by

those already versed in this field – think Pete Leuzinger, Tim Kelly. We also need to have continued training in CPR. The Association could offer a certification program to its superintendents and their assistants on an annual basis. Perhaps the best time for this would be at a spring meeting. Also, we need more progressive ideas for our educational programs. The best way to achieve this is to have our accomplished senior superintendents participate on the Education Committee. I realize that most of these supers have “been there and done that,” but nothing replaces experience. These superintendents need not chair the committee, but volunteer as members to provide others with their acquired knowledge, expertise and counsel.

- Every year brings to the fore-

Decide to reduce in-season reel maintenance



BUSH HOG® TURF

We Make You Look Your BestSM

Reel and Bedknife Grinders

- ⊖ Self-contained coolant system and standard Lexan shielding provides maximum operator safety
- ⊖ Change from reel to bedknife sharpening in three minutes
- ⊖ Spin grind AND relief grind without setup change
- ⊖ Sharpen in or out of frame
- ⊖ Solid Cast bed with 2" polished and protected guide rails
- ⊖ Variable and adjustable traverse speed and spin speed
- ⊖ Auto infeed

Call for Demonstration
815-469-8500 or 708-301-8500



Division of Christensen Power Equipment Inc.
9506 W. Manhattan Rd., Frankfort, IL 60423

front the need for more and improved publicity. A vision for our future might include recruiting some of our most accomplished and experienced individuals who have worked with the press numerous times in the past – Paul Voykin, Oscar Miles being some of the elder statesmen, Brian Bossert and Don Ferreri in the next wave. Here, once again, the seasoned superintendents need to consult and guide the Public Relations Committee. This is being done now, to some extent, but further efforts need to be made to ensure this process continues.

- We need to continue to improve our image. Perhaps we could accomplish this by dressing up a few days a week, a step or two above our crews. Many superintendents are already doing this and enjoying more respect at their clubs. Perhaps the Association could bring back the

clothing merchandise program that enabled superintendents to purchase high-quality golf apparel at discounted prices. Previously, this attire had the



Past president Tim Kelly in 1992.

Association logo on it. This was not only a good deal for purchase, but also spread the word about our Association.

- The Midwest Association should continue to promote candidates

for the GCSAA board, thus having representation at the national level. Thanks to Bob Maibusch for serving now. This representation allows us a direct line for input into the affairs of the GCSAA. This involvement also enables us to better understand the direction of the GCSAA board and encourages us to be more diligent in running our own Board.

The next five, 10, 25, even 50 years (some of us won't be around at that time) will see many changes. Change is good – but there will be periods, as we experienced in the past, where not everything will run smoothly or progress as we desire. Sometimes it is necessary to take one step back to go two steps forward. Many of us have done this ourselves. All of us who are members of the Midwest need to put our best effort into helping the Mid-

(continued on page 20)

When You
Want it
Green...



- Irrigation Well Siting Studies
- Well Rehabilitation Evaluations
- Aquifer Testing & Analysis
- Ground Water Modeling
- Well and Wellfield Design
- Water Quality Studies

Aquifer Science & Technology
Your Ground Water Resource
A division of Ruekert/Mielke, Inc.

16335 S. Harlem Ave.
Tinley Park, Illinois 60477
708-444-7360

www.ruekert-mielke.com

CONSERV FS


**75 Years of Quality Service,
Petroleum Products and People**

**Nobody offers more resources – or more
individual attention – than CONSERV FS.**



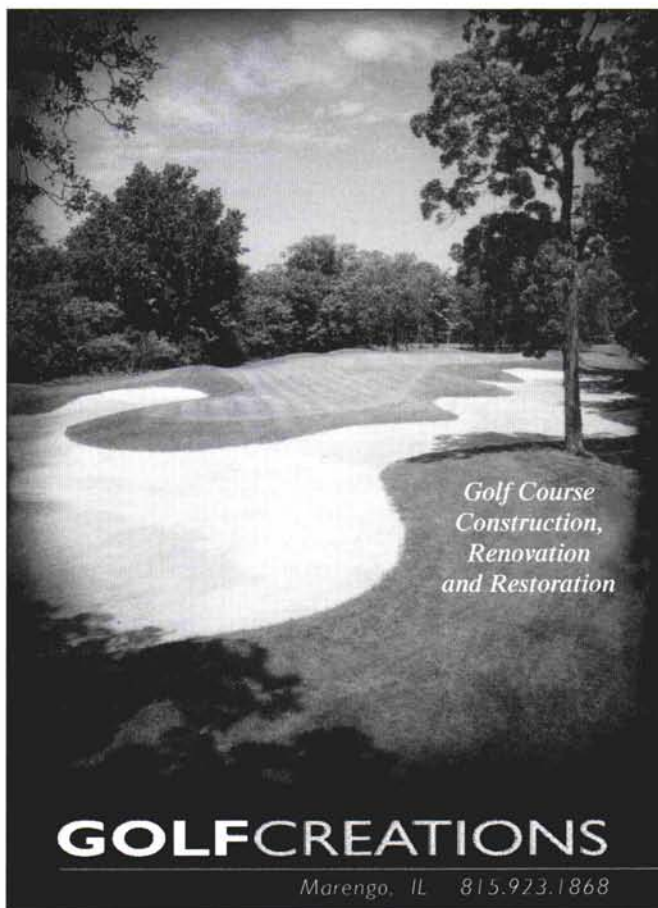
- **We are Committed to Excellence**
- **We are a Member-Owned Co-op**
- **We Feature a Full-Service Petroleum Team to Support Your Business**
(800)924-9942

west grow and be even better than it is today. We need a positive attitude to accomplish those visions that will help us build a bigger, stronger and better Association. I hope that there are a number of you out there – old, young, male, female, new, experienced, or any combination thereof – who are willing to put forth your efforts to forge a stronger Association for the 21st century.

God bless our Association, and God bless America. 



Past presidents (L to R) Don Cross, Bob Maibusch and Al Fierst in 1997.



*Golf Course
Construction,
Renovation
and Restoration*

GOLFCREATIONS

Marengo, IL 815.923.1868


Consistent	<i>Quality</i>
Consistent	<i>Service</i>
Consistent	<i>Soil Type</i>

**Executive Blend Bluegrass Sod
Penncross & L-93 Bentgrass Sod
StrathAyr Soil-Free
42" Big Roll available**

**IR HUBER RANCH
SOD NURSERY INC**

P.O. Box 188, Schneider, IN 46376
800-553-0552 • (219)552-0552
www.hubersod.com

Migratory Bird Management
Have Dogs Will Travel



Border Collies

GOOSE CONTROL
Harold Frederickson
If we don't answer our phone
we're on another wild goose chase
708-361-6772