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### FRONT COVER

Barrington Hills Country Club's no. 1 handicap hole, no. 3 is a 425-yard par 4.  
(Photo by Jim Trzinski/Compliments of Waupaca Sand & Solutions)

## 2 ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

### 75th-Anniversary Heroes

Brian Bossert

## 5 DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

### A Few Thoughts from the New Kid on the Block

Tim Anderson

## 10 ASK THE "EXPERT":

### Calcium the New Vogue

Joel Simmons

## 16 SUPER -N- SITE:

### Mark Bobb -N- Barrington Hills Country Club

Larry Tomaszewski

## 18 75TH ANNIVERSARY RETROSPECTIVE:

### A Tale of Two Seventies

Jim McNair

## 24 FEATURE ARTICLE:

### My Friend and Mentor—Ray Gerber

Fred Opperman

## 30 THE BULL SHEET

John Gurke

## 36 THE WAY WE WERE

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.



# 75th-Anniversary Heroes

*Ernesto Fernandez, a veteran of 14 years at Green Acres Country Club, moved his family (literally) to Skokie Country Club in 1967. He would spend nearly 20 years there until his retirement in 1987. Young Fernando, the lone child of seven that would remain in the business, started at Skokie with his father in 1970. After 14 years, the last eight as the mechanic, he could see that his career was dead-ending a bit. John Berarducci let the up-and-coming Fernando know that a formal education would be required if he planned on moving forward in the business. Fernando went on to get a couple of two-year degrees and of course, was the superintendent at Green Acres for many years before growing in Black Sheep Golf Club. Fernando has also contributed to the industry by educating many Spanish-speaking workers in our area.*

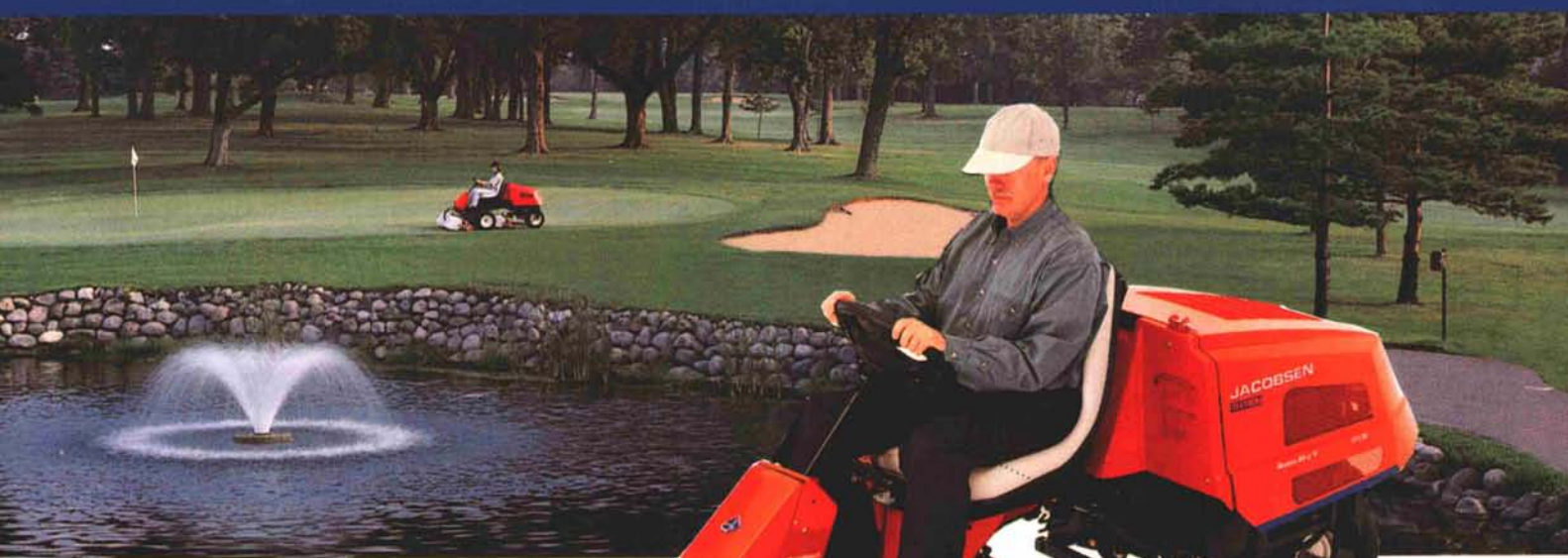
*I thought it was a good time to remember the day-in, day-out efforts of our staff and highlight some of the long-term dedication in our business. As a group, we would never have come this far without the contributions of our employees, particularly the Hispanic community.*

While Fernando has risen to the top of his profession, the vast majority of the Mexican-born contingent is laboring along, the physical engine of our operation. They are, as Paul Voykin from Briarwood states, “responsible for the greening of America,” and as we look back over the last 75 years, we salute this largely unsung group of heroes. Their story is one of longevity and of dedication.

It is my understanding that grounds staffs became integrated with Hispanic workers after World War II. The United States was recruiting laborers in all phases of the agriculture industry and as these jobs came and went, many of these same people transitioned into seasonal golf course employees.

The stories that have surfaced over the years come in many shapes and sizes. However, for longevity there are few that can parallel the Cabrera story at Bob O’Link Country Club. Humberto retired a few years back after 32 years. Humberto’s three sons (Jr., Gerardo and Raul) and his brother (Hector) all have double-digit years of experience. Superintendent Rick Bowden reports that Humberto passed on his strong work ethic and that all the family members have taken “ownership” in the course. Rick, himself in his 22nd year at the club, has seen this group grow as individuals, take on wives, raise children, become legal citizens and buy homes. Rick looks forward to employing their sons in the future. He also mentioned that Alonso Esquivel (23 years) has served the club well and is currently the irrigation technician/foreman and also helps to train the interns.

*(continued on page 34)*



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# A Few Thoughts from the New Kid on the Block

*When Brian Bossert called and asked if I would be interested in filling a position on the MAGCS Board of Directors, I was excited at the opportunity. But when he went on to offer me double the standard compensation for a first-year director's position and threw in benefits, I thought, "Wow—this is too good to be true." Well, at my first meeting, I quickly learned three things:*

- 1)  $2 \times 0 = 0$ ;
- 2) "Benefits" is a term used to refer to free coffee; and
- 3) My director's column for *On Course* was due by the end of the month.

Having absorbed these three vital pieces of information, I carefully evaluated my circumstances and determined that my addiction to caffeine had finally reached a point where I truly would do anything for a cup of coffee.

*... environmental stewardship is the responsibility of all superintendents and there are countless ways to express your commitment to protecting the environment.*

All kidding aside, I am excited to serve on the Board and I have been asked to work with the Environmental Committee. The Environmental Committee is a fairly new committee and as such, our primary goal for this year is to develop a formal standard operating procedure for the Committee. This SOP will outline the purpose, structure and duties of the Committee and its members. It will serve as a guide under which future versions of the Environmental Committee will operate. As we work to develop our SOP, we will gather information from the GCSAA, USGA and other allied organizations. However, most important is input from the membership of the MAGCS. This is the key to developing a SOP that reflects the views of the membership. If you would like to express your vision for the Environmental Committee, I would ask that you contact me at 815-469-5903.

Indeed, environmental stewardship is the responsibility of all superintendents and there are countless ways to express your commitment to protecting the environment. The following is a brief list of ways to demonstrate stewardship.

- 1) **Join an association committed to improving the environment.** This could include the Audubon Society, Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanical Garden or your local garden club.
- 2) **Undertake an environmental management program (EMP).** The EMP is offered through the GCSAA. These seminars and self-study courses can help superintendents establish themselves as the most

*(continued on page 6)*

knowledgeable person at their facilities when it comes to environmental topics.

**3) Communicate about IPM.**

Sure, we all understand and utilize IPM practices. But do we convey this to our membership and patrons? Next time you are racking your brain for a topic for that monthly newsletter, how about a couple quick paragraphs on how your course practices and implements integrated pest management techniques on a routine basis.

**4) Leverage newsletters.**

For many of us, this is one of our primary means of communicating with our members. In the winter, when course news is a bit lacking, you could write an article highlighting the benefits that golf courses provide for the community, the economy and the environment. Two

good references are a 1994 publication from the USGA entitled *Golf and the Environment* and a 1992 publication from GCSAA titled *GCSAA Government Relations Desk Manual*.

**5) Carry a camera in your cart.**

You know the old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." This year, I have kept a camera in my golf cart. Having it available has allowed me to capture several photos of wildlife at home on the golf course. These photos can be compiled to develop a wildlife photo album that can be displayed at the pro shop or clubhouse.

**6) Include a line item in your budget for environmental expenditures.**

It doesn't have to have a large dollar amount attached to it. Just the fact that you include it demonstrates that

your facility is serious about the role of environmental steward. The monies in this line item can be used for any number of environmental-related expenditures, including: nesting boxes, association dues, waste-oil removal, pesticide training seminars for the crew, water-quality testing, or projects that incorporate naturalized areas on the property.

These are just a few of the many things that each of us can do at our own facilities to demonstrate that as individuals and as an organization, we are committed to enhancing and protecting the environment.

As for my addiction to caffeine, from what I understand admitting you have a problem is the first step on the road to recovery. But in the meantime, I'll take my coffee black with one sugar.



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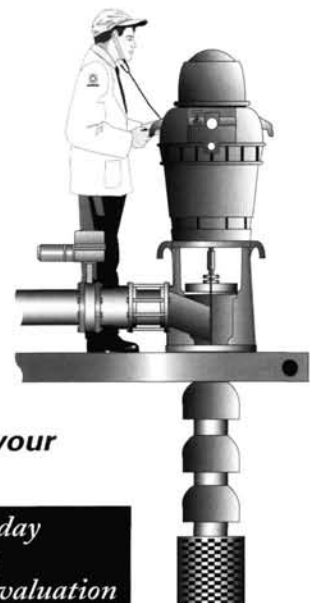


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# Calcium: The New Vogue

*Calcium has always taken a back seat to the "big boys" of soil fertility. The industry buzz is usually nitrogen, and new forms are frequently being released to the market. Recently, potassium has taken on the role of "favored son." Referred to as a secondary nutrient behind nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, calcium is finally starting to take its place in the ranks of vogue nutrients.*

*Calcium is of macro importance to both the plant and the soil in many more ways than simply moving the pH scale. It plays a major role in the physiology of the plant, strengthening its physical structure and helping in protection from disease attack.*

It is true that NPK is used in greater percentages than calcium, but calcium is used more by weight and volume than any other nutrient. Practically speaking, calcium is rarely considered as a nutrient at all! Instead, the focus on calcium has been more as a soil buffer to help adjust pH. Calcium is of macro importance to both the plant and the soil in many more ways than simply moving the pH scale. It plays a major role in the physiology of the plant, strengthening its physical structure and helping in protection from disease attack. In the soil, the importance of calcium is manifold, including the reduction of soil compaction and assistance in providing a better environment for the proliferation of beneficial bacteria. Some research even suggests that calcium plays a role in weed populations. The list goes on, and yes, it can have a role in the pH of the soil!

## **The Plant**

Imagine that the room you're sitting in is a plant cell of your favorite turf species. The walls that surround you are made of calcium pectate. The more calcium that is available to that cell, the stronger those walls become. If calcium is limited, the walls are as weak as balsa wood. As more calcium becomes available, those walls take on the strength of cinder blocks. The stronger the cell, the stronger the plant, and the quicker its recovery from the enormous pressures that it faces on the golf course. This works for both leaves and roots. The stronger the root cells are, the more aggressive the roots will be moving through the soil. Proper levels of calcium within the plant strengthen the whole plant and allow for efficient use of sunlight, carbon dioxide, water, nitrogen and mineral nutrients.

Calcium also plays a major role in the construction of numerous hormone and enzyme systems that can help protect the plant from insect and disease attack. It has been reported that as a pathogen probes its way into a cell, it injects an enzyme to help break that cell down. There is