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Home: 773-774-1486, Office: 847-632-9331
E-mail: fbehnke@juno.com

SECRETARY / TREASURER

Phil Zeinert, Elgin C.C.
Home: 815-748-5730, Office: 847-622-4823
E-mail: Zeinert5@tbcnet.com

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

George Minnis
MAGCS P.O. Box 760, Batavia, IL 60510
Office: 630-406-5356, Fax: 630-406-5456
E-mail: geo@magcs.org

BOARD

Tim Anderson, Prestwick C.C.
Home: 630-718-9601, Office: 815-469-5903
E-mail: tjanderso@aol.com

Dave Braasch, Glen Erin G.C.
Home: 608-373-7081, Office: 608-346-9009
E-mail: junior12i@aol.com

Luke Cella, Tamarack G.C.
Home: 630-208-0721, Office: 630-904-4000, x218
E-mail: lukecella@att.net

Gary Hearn, Salt Creek G.C.
Home: 630-350-2634, Office: 630-773-4790
E-mail: scgaryhgc@aol.com

Tony Kalina, Prairie Landing G.C.
Home: 630-690-2683, Office: 630-232-1650
E-mail: puregolf@megsnet.net

Scott Speiden, Itasca C.C.
Home: 630-773-3632, Office: 630-773-1800, x141
E-mail: greensfxr@aol.com

PRESIDENT EMERITUS

Luke Strojny, Poplar Creek G.C.
Home: 630-830-7370, Office: 847-310-3618
E-mail: lukes40@juno.com

COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Dave Armentrout, Turf Professionals
Equipment Co.
Office: 630-773-5555
E-mail: dave.armentrout@turfproequipco.com

TURFGRASS ADVISOR

Dr. Randy T. Kane
University of Illinois & CDGA
630-257-2005

EDITOR

Cathy Miles Ralston
68 S. Waterford Drive
Round Lake, IL 60073
Phone & Fax: 847-740-0962
E-mail: on_course@hotmail.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

John Gurke
E-mail: Boornding@aol.com

GRAPHIC ARTIST

Mark Karczewski

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A black-capped chickadee perches on a sprig of winterberry studded with frozen water droplets.
(Photo by Tom Maple)

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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.

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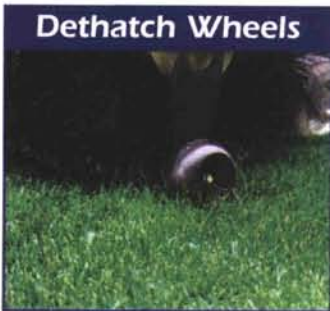
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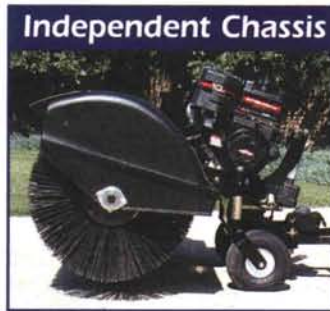
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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Kevin DeRoo Bartlett Hills G.C.

Where We Are, And Where We're Going

Apparently, gazing into my crystal ball is something I ought to get used to. It has quickly come to my attention that as the newly elected president of the MAGCS, I must adapt to unconventional thinking and sometimes put the cart before the horse. Such is the case of punching out my first president's message before actually being elected. Hopefully, running unopposed will have slanted the voting contingent heavily in my favor. I am the first to tell you I am not a politician and I adopt a Yogi Berra theory to election results and say, "It ain't over . . . 'til it's over." For the rest of the slate of candidates the Nominating Committee selected, early polls showed the races were too close to call. And don't be surprised that a nomination or two from the floor occurred. It's the democratic process in action. Now that the outcome is finalized, I can assure the membership that the MAGCS Board of Directors shall always do its best in serving this Association. It will be my responsibility to see to it that this newly elected Board shall follow the stone path of accomplishments already laid by the many previous boards. And if we are to truly be successful, hopefully we will lay a few stones of our own.

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*Today's membership
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To know the direction MAGCS is heading, we must define where we are now. Today's membership is close approaching the 700 mark, a number almost unthinkable just a few years ago. Membership Committee chair Tim Anderson attributes the increase in membership to a midseason membership drive and a change in policy as we allowed no guests to attend our golfing events. A total of 43 membership applications were processed this year.

MAGCS monthly meetings continue to be filled or near capacity. The new practice of online meeting notices and meeting registration through e-mail has proven to be very successful and is being used by over one-third of our membership. The use of our Web page is still in its infancy and we as a Board need to stay abreast of ways to distribute information to the membership. An additional application of our Web site has already gone into effect. Members can not only register for a meeting online, but also—as of this year's Midwest Turf Clinic—they can check to see the registration list as well. No longer will the Golf or Arrangements Committee chairperson have to call members to tell them of their registration status; they can check themselves. This change will especially help in the golf event registrations next year. Speaking of our golf meetings, Phil Zeinert and the Golf Committee should be commended for the events and prizes offered this year. A quicker way to score some of these events is one quandary we hope to resolve in 2003.

Meanwhile, as of this writing, Mike Mumper and his Arrangements Committee were diligently finalizing meeting sites for 2003. This is a great position to be in for the Board, but no time to rest either. 2004 will soon be upon us and meeting sites can be reserved well in advance. If you are thinking of hosting a meeting, please contact any Board member

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On Course... Of Course

What has the Editorial Committee been up to this year? "Where do I start?" is the question I ask myself. First and foremost, I would like to thank and recognize those who served on the Editorial Committee.

The MAGCS sponsors 12 different committees, eight of which rely heavily on the participation of Association members. This year's participation rate was a whopping 4%, or 25 members, some of whom serve on multiple committees.

- Dr. Randy Kane, CDGA
- Shane Kissack, Riverside Golf Club
- Bob McCallum, Orchard Hills Golf Club
- Erwin McKone, River Forest Country Club
- Jim McNair, Orchard Valley Golf Club
- Jon Jennings, Chicago Golf Club
- Paul Yerkes, Lesco Inc.
- Larry Tomaszewski, AXA Advisors
- Cathy Miles Ralston, Editor
- John Gurke, Contributing Editor

Who will serve on the Editorial Committee in 2003?

This spot intentionally left blank for future volunteers.

We will come back to that volunteer thing a little later in this column, since several hundred of you in the Association seem a bit unsure as to what that word means.

The new additions to *On Course* this year include the introduction and execution of the Fred D. Opperman Editorial Award. Articles eligible for the award must be written by a member of the MAGCS who is at the time of submission a class C, D, E, F or G member. Considering that more than just superintendent-authored articles are published in *On Course*, we felt that the development of an award for all other classes would be a great addition and reward for these authors' hard work. Who better to name the award after than Fred Opperman, long-time editor and pioneer in the transition of *the Bull Sheet* to *On Course*.

"The Way We Are," the sibling of "The Way We Were," made its debut, intermittently dealing with the issues and trends we contend with in today's golf course management profession. "The Voice of Experience" by Bob Williams grew out of Bob's generous offer to contribute his wisdom to the magazine by imparting some food for thought every month. Last but not least, we initiated the "Midwest Personalities" column. With a membership of nearly 700, it would take decades to profile our members solely through the "Super-N-Site" vehicle. We took into consideration that this Association comprises not only superintendents, but also assistants, vendors, researchers and allied professionals.

Got mojo? Volunteer!

The MAGCS sponsors 12 different committees, eight of which rely heavily on the participation of Association members. This year's participation rate

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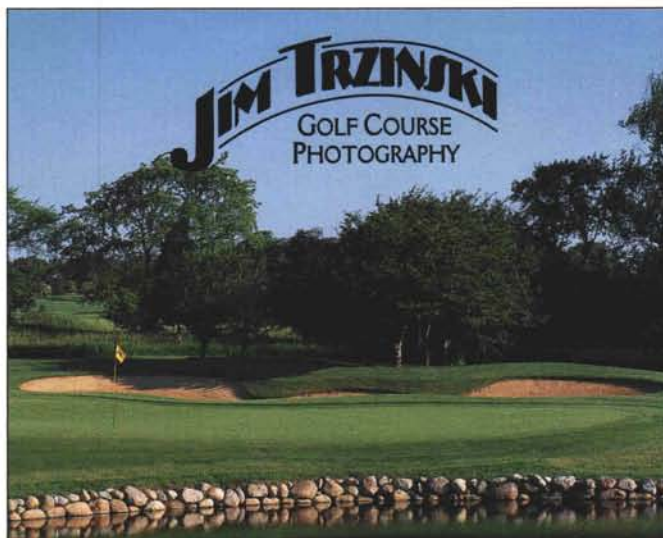
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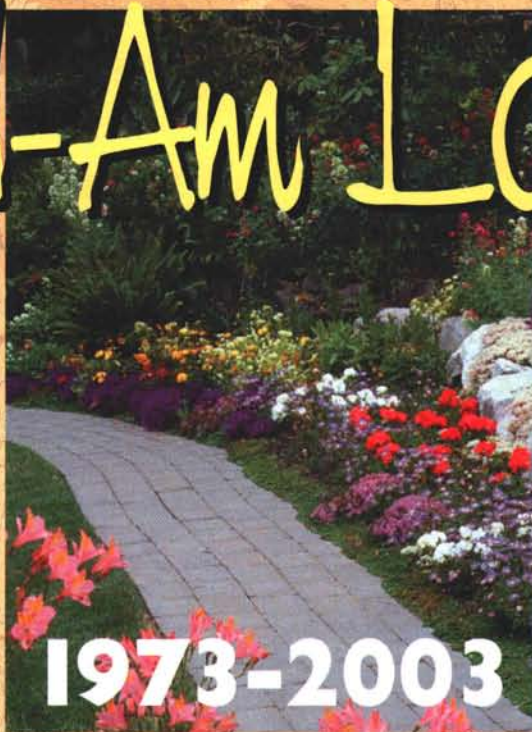
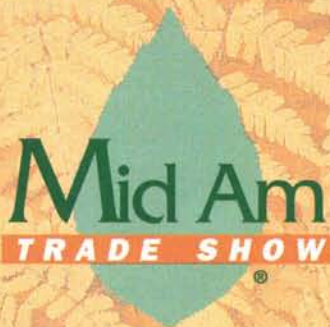
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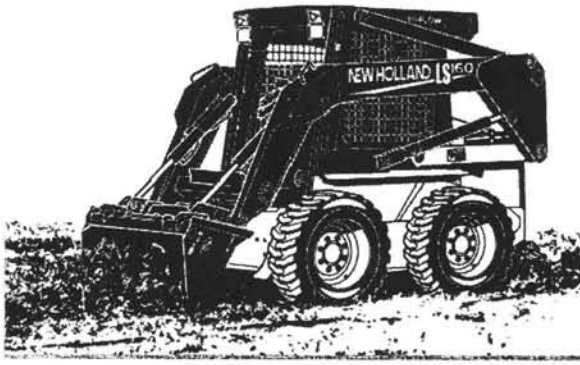


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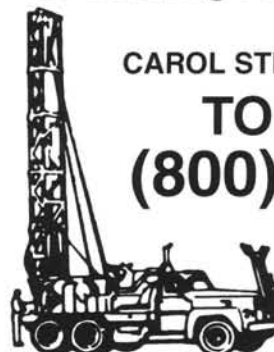
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Roughing It, The Right Way

I hear it a lot, out here at Stonewall Orchard Golf Club in northwest Lake County. "How do you get your roughs so thick?" Or, "You must really pump up your rough to get it to look like this."

I believe the roughs are as important as the rest of the playing field. We all spend countless hours taking care of the greens, tees and fairways. But think about the average player. If he is lucky, 25% of his game is in the fairways. For the most part, he is in the edge of the rough or "deep in it." Why not give him the playing surface he needs?

In truth, I don't pump it up. Our rough is the product of a lot of hard work from the crew and persistence in maintenance practices. Many years of experience and trial and error have taught me what does and doesn't work. Having seen both sides of the industry, public and private golf, it becomes easier to anticipate what golfers will and will not do (or mostly will not do). All this background comes into play on the establishment and maintenance of the rough.

I believe the roughs are as important as the rest of the playing field. We all spend countless hours taking care of the greens, tees and fairways. But think about the average player. If he is lucky, 25% of his game is in the fairways. For the most part, he is in the edge of the rough or "deep in it." Why not give him the playing surface he needs?

I will start with the development of the rough first. With strict financial constraints during construction, we had the choice of either a high-end bluegrass or 4" sand mix on the tees. The tees were my option and that is where we decided to place the money. So we opted for an average bluegrass mix. This mix consisted of a blend of 35% Abbey Kentucky bluegrass, 35% Viva Kentucky bluegrass and 30% Victa Kentucky bluegrass. This blend was significantly cheaper than the other premium blends we could have purchased.

We started seeding in the middle of summer 1998. There was no sod to be used on the course during construction. Once the area was graded and ready for seed, we applied a starter fertilizer at the rate of 2 lb. of N per thousand. Seed was then applied at the rate of 5 lb. per thousand. All hillsides, bunker edges and green banks were covered with Futera blankets. We laid more than 160,000 yards of Futera. Just a note here: if you are going to lay Futera blanket, do not overlap the edges. I can still see today some of the places we overlapped.

At this point, we started watering. I was taught to keep the grass like a rice paddy the first week. And so I did. With God's help, we had several timely rains and the roughs started to take off. We mowed the rough that fall with a 72" outfront and an 84" National starting at 2.5. In November, we did a dormant feed of the rough with some 32-5-7. It was the cheapest N with some P and K that we could get.

Starting in the spring of 1999, we decided to mow the rough with a rotary. This would be our primary mower. Growing the course in, we fertil-

(continued on page 10)

ized with 32-5-7 at 1 lb. N four times a year: May 1, June 10, August 30 and November 10. We supplemented the thin areas with 20-6-20 at the rate of 1 lb. N on July 15 and August 15 and 0-0-60 at 1 lb. potash on June 1 and September 1.

Opening in July of 1999, we realized the need to control carts in the roughs as well as around the greens. Having no curbing, we placed many large boulders at critical points in the path to keep traffic from cutting these corners. We then placed rope and posts around the course in strategic places. The ropes would herd the carts to the path near the greens and break up traffic patterns in the rough areas. The use of a rope approximately 15' long to disrupt the traffic flow is all you need. The first season we moved the ropes twice a week. This was to reduce any traffic pattern that would form.

During all dry spells, we had a person dedicated to running sprinkler stands. It was critical to maintain these areas with irrigation. With a double-row system, most of the irrigation barely reaches the cart paths. It is necessary to provide adequate irrigation cycles in the far rough areas as well. We had a dozen stands and more than 2,500 feet of hose. We ran one to one-and-a-half-hour cycles. This was enough time for one person to move the stands around the entire course. Our roughs were filling in nicely. We

observed excessive wear in the late fall when most of the grass had gone dormant. This was due to heavy play and low temperatures. There was no time for the turf to recover.

The second season, we fertilized the same as the first. We increased our rope and post supply and started to move these on a daily basis. If you keep the carts from traveling in the same path on a daily basis, you can drastically reduce the wear areas. During this season, we reduced our height of cut to 2.25". We bought a second rotary rough mower and started to cut roughs one-and-a-half to two times a week.

That fall, we sodded bare areas along the paths and wear areas. The wear areas were stripped, aerified, then sodded. Laying only 2,000 yards in these high-traffic areas was sufficient. We continued with the supplemental applications of 20-6-20 and 0-0-60 in the heavy-traffic areas. We felt our plan of attack was working.

Starting in the 2001 season, the height of grass was taken back to 2.5". We reduced the fertilizer to 0.75 lb. N applications instead of 1 lb. N. We saw a significant drop in the weed populations as the turf density increased. Now we are realizing a reduction in our costs with less fertilizer and fewer applications of weed control. During the fall of 2001, we did see signs of dollar spot in the

rough areas. While it was a season of high pressure, I felt we were at the edge of where we needed to be for fertility. Any heavy-traffic areas again were treated with supplemental applications of 0-0-60 and 20-6-20.

With continued daily movement of the ropes, the wear areas and traffic patterns were kept to a minimum. In the fall, we sodded wear areas. Aerification is the key to preventing the sodding of the same areas from being an annual event. While some always will need this due to various problems, not all the areas have to be. Stay on top of rope movement, watering needs and fertility levels to keep these areas to a minimum every year.

The 2002 season we mowed at the height of 2.5". We used a 25-5-15 fertilizer at the rate of 0.75 lb. N, three times during the season with the fall application done in November. We continue with the supplemental applications of 20-6-20 and 0-0-60. We have logged a tremendous amount of hours running sprinkler stands and moving ropes. But it all pays off, as I am always asked how we keep the roughs so thick. The answer: dedication, team effort and hard work. Hats off to my crew, mechanic and assistant; without their hard work and effort, none of this could be possible.



One secret behind Stonewall Orchard's lush, playable rough: the strategic use of ropes to control cart traffic.