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FRONT COVER

Coyotes are a common (and often welcome) sight on Chicago-area golf courses. This portrait of a coyote amidst a snowy landscape appears courtesy of Tom Maple of Ingleside, who has won awards for his nature photography. Tom will be inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association's Hall of Fame this April.

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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.



What the Midwest Elves Have Been Up To Lately

I am sure that by now, most of us are in winter mode. The pace of life has slowed down and things are a little less hectic. It is the perfect time to reflect on what was successful and what did not work so well last year.

Our executive secretary, George Minnis, has come up with a great idea to help decrease postage, copying and stationery expenses. Beginning in March, members will be able to receive all MAGCS correspondence via e-mail. Members will also be able to register for meetings on the Web site using a credit card. In this day of electronic everything, I am very excited about this new member service and hope it is heavily used.

Now is the time to prepare for the 2002 golfing season. As superintendents, there is so much we must complete before the new season begins. New equipment to be ordered, chemical and fertilizer programs to be evaluated and products to be purchased. The off-season is also the time to sharpen our skills as superintendents. Many education opportunities are available to take advantage of, including the GCSAA conference and our own MAGCS March meeting. I do know how many times I have been asked, "What do you do all winter?" and when I tell them all that I do, I get that deer-in-the-headlights look followed by, "I never realized that there was so much involved in your job." I usually reply with, "What do you think, the golf course elves come in during the winter and get everything ready for the next year?"

The MAGCS "elves" have also been very busy this winter. Back in early December, the Executive Board met to formulate the 2002 budget. Although I have been involved in the process before, this year's process was extremely smooth. Thanks to the efforts of Brian, Kevin and Fred, we were able to balance the budget with ease. The 2002 budget will have revenues and expenses each totaling more than \$318,000. As our Association continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly important to keep expenses in line with revenues. Our executive secretary, George Minnis, has come up with a great idea to help decrease postage, copying and stationery expenses. Beginning in March, members will be able to receive all MAGCS correspondence via e-mail. Members will also be able to register for meetings on the Web site using a credit card. In this day of electronic everything, I am very excited about this new member service and hope it is heavily used. George has informed me that as of late December, more than 200 members had signed up for this service. I strongly urge members wishing to cut down the amount of paper accumulating on their desks to start using this service. Please contact George if you want to sign up.

Many of the other committees have met and are planning this year's activities or events. One of the biggest events we host is the Midwest hospitality room at the GCSAA convention. Paul Yerkes has been hard at work planning this year's event, which will be held at the Omni Rosen in Orlando on February 6 and 7. Some may not remember the days when the hospitality room was held in a suite. The room was usually overcrowded with a temperature of well over 90 degrees. This year's event, again, will be held in a ballroom setting. The ballroom setting has been well received by the membership and continues to grow in size and cost. Expenses for the 2001 room Dallas were \$39,000 for the two nights. A big THANK YOU goes out to the sponsors of the 2002 MAGCS hospitality room. If not for their generous support, this event would not be so successful. In this time of corporate cutbacks, it is nice

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A Round to Remember

Sometimes things just fall into place. This past year, I had the fortunate pleasure of living out a dream. An impossible dream, or at least so I thought, if not for me being in the right place at the right time. Oh yeah, and thanks to a whole lot of good fortune.

It is only very rarely that you find yourself on the receiving end of an invitation to come play not just any golf course, but THE golf course, the golf course of which all other golf courses are mere offspring. Naturally, I am talking about "The Old Course" at St. Andrews, and the invite was right from superintendent Eddie Adams himself.

The place was the MAGCS hospitality suite in Dallas, the time last February. As my newly made friend and I parted company, I still remember his famous last words, "Ah man, eef yor evr ore me nek of da woods, coom plec me gowf coors." (My nearest translation being: Kevin, if you are ever over in my neck of the woods, come play my golf course.) Now, if you are in this profession, this is an offer we generally extend to our colleagues on a fairly regular basis. It is only very rarely that you find yourself on the receiving end of an invitation to come play not just any golf course, but THE golf course, the golf course of which all other golf courses are mere offspring. Naturally, I am talking about "The Old Course" at St. Andrews, and the invite was right from superintendent Eddie Adams himself.

Not even in my wildest imagination could I conceive taking advantage of such a gracious invitation. That is where good fortune comes in. I discovered it helps having family residing on the other side of the pond as well. Currently, my sister and her husband live in Amsterdam, Holland. From there, it is just an hour flight to Edinburgh, Scotland. This is significant for me because then my traveling on a European excursion to play golf quickly turns into going to Europe to visit family . . . and maybe play a little golf, too. That was much more palatable for my lovely wife Cheryl, although my wanting her to come with was what really sold her. For the sake of brevity, I will not be describing our entire journey here. But, if you ever get the chance, I highly recommend touring the beaches of northern France in a province called Normandy.

As I stated before, getting from Holland to Scotland is normally a one-hour flight. It is just a hop across the North Sea. We must have bought into the platinum tour package, though, because our trip took eight hours. It is not often you get to take off from an airport, fly for an hour and crash-land at the same airport you just took off from . . . then drink for free for the next five hours while you wait for a new plane . . . then board the plane with 150 loaded Scotsmen with whom by now you have become the best of friends and try again. Upon landing in Edinburgh, we found we were still an hour's drive from our ultimate destination of St. Andrews. That is another adventure altogether when you see your rental car with the steering wheel on the wrong side, which begins to make sense when you are driving, because you do that on the wrong side of the road. Needless to say, getting there was only half the fun.

Upon finally arriving on the hallowed ground of "The Old Course," I tried to keep things in perspective. I found it difficult to concentrate on my golf game when I could still not believe I was there. From the outset, my goals

(continued on page 6)

for the day were simple and attainable. No setting myself up for disappointment, although I do not believe that could have happened no matter what my final score. All I really wanted to accomplish was to break 100, shoot par on at least one hole and enjoy the moment. That one was a no-brainer. Oh yes, there was one more goal. I really did not want to embarrass myself off the first tee as the spectators gather to watch each foursome tee off.

My round was far from spectacular. Those of you who have seen me play, know my rounds never really are. Destined to be a lifetime 18-handicapper, I guess. I managed to snap a far hook off the first tee, landing safely in the 18th fairway. Not the best of drives, but far from embarrassing. With two of my goals already in hand before I even reached the first green, I was sure the others would follow. On the third hole, I got my par; on the fourth, my caddie found another one of my wayward drives had settled on a gravel cart path. Forgetting for a moment where I was, I asked for a ruling. Eddie was quick to respond with, "Ah man, cun yo see da bowl . . . den heet da bowl." (Meaning: Kevin, can you see the ball? Then hit the ball!) No free lifts here. On the seventh hole, I managed to navigate my ball into my first sod-faced bunker, six shots later I managed to navigate it out. Number nine I drove the green, only to three-putt for par. On the 11th, I five-putted for an 8; on the scorecard, they call that an "other." On 16, I saw the first out-of-bounds stakes; unfortunately, my ball was on the wrong side of them. On 17, I hit a hotel with my drive, finally got out of a sod-faced bunker in one, and putted from a cart path and still salvaged bogey. On 18, I finished with my ninth par of the day. Couple that with my three bogies and my six "others" and I shot my most memorable 95 ever.

In retrospect, my score is as immaterial to me now as it was then. Looking back, the greatest feeling is the fulfillment of a dream. I also found that what I noticed most about St. Andrews is not what is there, but

what is not. When playing, I discovered there are no trees, and not an annual flower on the premises, yet it's one of the most scenic places I've ever been. There are no motorized golf carts, no striped fairways, no manicured rough, no painted hazards, and no beverage cart or halfway house. In essence, you will find no-frills golf. Golf in its purest form, rich in tradition and natural as can be. Golf as it was meant to be played, not the revenue-based Americanized version to which I have been accustomed.

I not only walked away with a better appreciation for the game, but for my profession as well. I learned that sand bunkers should be a hazard and the true meaning of "rough." I learned free lifts are not an option, and putting surfaces do not need to be rolling at 10 or 11 feet to be challenging. Houses don't really belong on golf courses and "grasshoppers" are really caddies in the states. I also learned that the Scottish are the nicest and funniest people I have ever met and that 18 holes of golf can be played in less than four hours, even on a busy day. And finally, I learned that dreams are so much better when shared with family and friends.

I not only walked away with a better appreciation for the game, but for my profession as well.

A special thanks to my sister Sue and her husband Joe Baker, for making this trip possible. I thank my brother Mike and his wife Sue for traveling 7,000 miles just to play a round of golf with me. I thank my wife Cheryl for having the courage to get back on a plane after we crash-landed once and for being our trip photographer. And last, I would sincerely like to thank Eddie Adams who proved to me that, "The bigger they are . . . the nicer they are." He certainly gave me a round to remember.



If the bridge looks familiar, that's because it's the most photographed bridge in golf: the Swilken Bridge on hole 18 of "The Old Course" at St. Andrews, to be precise. Pictured are (L to R) Joe Baker, Mike DeRoo, Eddie Adams and Kevin DeRoo.

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Weird Fall Weather Segues to An Unusual Winter

September and October were cool and wet for the most part. In Lemont, we recorded over 7" of rain for these two months. The cool, wet weather pattern changed drastically, however, and November was one of the warmest on record for most eastern regions of the U.S., and it was fairly dry until the last week of the month. This warm-weather trend continued well into December, which had many superintendents wondering if they had "blown out" their irrigation systems and sprayed for snow molds a little too early this year.

... a number of superintendents were concerned that the late warm spell would increase the amount of winter kill we see on northern turf species, especially Poa annua. This can happen under several circumstances, including when there is a sudden cold spell following unseasonably warm and wet weather.

Also, turf managers in many regions of the country reported that some dormant trees and shrubs were beginning to bloom (or break buds) in late November. In the transition zone and farther south, many superintendents reported that warm-season grasses such as bermudagrass had reversed their progression toward winter dormancy and were turning green and growing again. This raises questions as to the winter survivability of both woody ornamentals and warm-season grasses once truly cold conditions arrive, but these concerns are probably not applicable to most of Illinois (at least not the northern half of the state).

We did receive a number of questions about how this late warm spell was affecting the turf leading into winter, including possible effects on fall pest controls. One frequent observation was that the high soil moisture and extended warm temperatures seemed to promote a lot of earthworm activity, especially in fairways. Some late-season mowings were disrupted by worm castings, and some fairways were reported to be pretty much un-mowable. However, in general, most of us in the turf science end of things still think earthworm activity should be viewed as a positive, not a negative.

Second, a number of superintendents were concerned that the late warm spell would increase the amount of winter kill we see on northern turf species, especially *Poa annua*. This can happen under several circumstances, including when there is a sudden cold spell following unseasonably warm and wet weather. We don't think this will be a big problem at this point, even though some significantly cold air moved through the region around Christmas. Turf that is most likely to see damage now would be in low areas where water collects and ice sheets can form.

Also, there were a number of questions as to whether snow-mold fungicides would lose effectiveness as late November rains fell and the turf continued to grow. In general, there is good evidence that snow-mold applications hold pretty well against rainfall and warmer temperatures, and in most cases, mowing after a snow-mold application won't remove a significant amount of fungicide from the turf canopy. Most of the fungicides we use have some systemic activity (except Daconil and related chlorothalonil products) and have a fairly long half-life in thatch and soil. PCNB is one of the most widely used

fungicides on fairways in northern Illinois, and rainfall or mowing following application would probably not have a significant negative effect on snow-mold control with PCNB through the winter because of its systemic movement and long half-life in the thatch. However, if we have a mild winter and a cool, wet spring, re-treatment for control of pink snow mold in the March-May timeframe may be necessary in '02.

As mentioned previously, the warm and dry conditions of November allowed some delayed fall construction projects to continue later into the season than planned. Most turf that was sodded and seeded very late had a chance to become well-established before winter dormancy because of the warm weather. We found ourselves in a weather-induced predicament at Midwest Golf House, where Wadsworth Construction has been working since August to build our three-hole Short Course. Over 18" of rain fell in Lemont from late July through the end of October, which drastically slowed all phases of

the project—from early earth-moving to grading, installation of irrigation and finishing of greens construction. We had hoped to be finished and have most of the course seeded by the end of September, but we actually came to a close on construction around the middle of November . . . ! Slopes around tees, greens and bunkers were sodded November 5-12 to prevent soil erosion over the winter; unfortunately, no seed will be planted until next spring.

All in all, it was a very unusual transition into winter, but we will take it!



*... if we have
a mild winter and
a cool, wet spring,
re-treatment for
control of pink
snow mold in
the March-May
timeframe may
be necessary in '02.*

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Goose Control: Owning a Dog or Hiring a Service

When I first became a golf course superintendent, it was a rare and beautiful sight to see Canada geese fly in formation, and if you were lucky, land on your golf course for a drink and a snack. You would run and get your camera so you could get some great shots of wildlife up close and personal!



Author Harold Frederickson tips his cap to Border collies.

All that has changed now. Many Canada geese do not migrate as they once did. We now have what are referred to as resident geese. These geese will remain in an area unless there is a heavy snow cover and no food or open water is available. Between these resident geese and the true migratory geese, the goose population has become a problem that has grown out of control. Yes, they are everywhere ... at golf courses, colleges, cemeteries, shopping centers, office complexes, and even in your own backyard!

Over the years, at conferences and trade shows, my partner Susan Hagberg and I have repeatedly fielded the question as to whether our company will sell a Border collie that has been trained to chase geese. The answer is yes, we can, but let's examine some of the features, both pro and con, of owning a dog as opposed to hiring a dog and handler.

Owning a Dog

A great reason for a resident dog is that he is always there when you are. If you take him out routinely, he will do his job well and rid your course of geese. However, owning a dog is a commitment and dogs are not disposable. Border collies are very social animals. They love being with people. If you buy a dog, it shouldn't be locked in the shop all night with the tractor and mowers. It needs to be with and bond with its handler. Bonding is a very important part of a dog's will to work and sometimes a handler change can have an adverse change in the dog's work habits and personality.

Some of the responsibilities of owning a dog are as follows:

- **Medical Needs:** All dogs need regular visits to the vet. In addition to the shots, there are heartworm tests and meds and because Border collies on regular goose patrol spend so much time outside, flea and tick prevention is imperative.
- **Food:** Herding dogs have special nutritional needs. Because of their increased activity, they must have a very high-protein food.
- **Liability:** Because this is a working dog, it is suggested that you carry extra liability insurance.
- **Grooming:** It is amazing what a dog will get into and a dead skunk is Chanel No. 5 to a Border collie! Because the dogs work outside, they also need regular brushing and baths.



Geese take flight from a canine pursuer.