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FRONT COVER

Your 2002 Board of Directors and editorial staff is, front row, L to R: secretary/treasurer Fred Behnke, Mount Prospect G.C.; president Luke Strojny, CGCS, Poplar Creek G.C.; vice president Kevin DeRoo, Bartlett Hills G.C., back row, L to R: *On Course* editor Cathy Miles Ralston; director Phil Zeinert, CGCS, Elgin C.C.; director Dave Braasch, Hughes Creek G.C.; president emeritus Brian Bossert, CGCS, Bryn Mawr C.C.; director Mike Mumper, Park Ridge C.C.; director Tim Anderson, Prestwick C.C.; director Luke Cella, Tamarack G.C.; *On Course* contributing editor John Gurke, CGCS; and director Gary Hearn, Salt Creek G.C. (photo by Bill Ficht)

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A Tribute to Gary Adams

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.



ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Luke Strojny, CGCS Poplar Creek G.C.

Putting 2001 In Our Rearview Mirrors

As I walked around the show floor during the recent NCTE, I noticed a recurring theme. Most of us are very happy to see 2001 end.

I am sure many of you have noticed that our seasons are getting longer. Many courses open in mid-March and are closing in December or staying open all year . . . Early openings and/or late closings put a strain on budgets.

In my eyes, 2001 was a year that just would not end soon enough. Our country was attacked, changing forever the way we live our lives. A year ago, who would have thought opening your mail could be life-threatening? We now are a little more apprehensive about flying and pay attention to who is on the plane with us. The nation's economy has taken a downward turn, which has affected our jobs and families. It amazes me how quickly our lives have changed.

The WEATHER!!! 2001 was not a great weather year. The spring was wet and cold. Summer had its moments . . . hot, dry spells followed by perfect conditions and very spotty rainfall. Then came the fall. For those of us who had fall projects, the past autumn's weather was a major pain in the butt. The one thing you could count on was a two- or three-inch rain every couple of days to make things so wet that it was impossible to work on your project for a week. The only saving grace was late October and November. For those of us on the public side, there is nothing better than a few 60-degree weekends in November to help bail out what could have been a dismal year, revenue-wise. As superintendents, we all know we cannot control the weather. I wonder if the golfers who play our courses know that.

Speaking of golfers, their expectations are increasing. This is not breaking news in 2001, however, the issue does seem to be coming to the forefront. I am sure many of you have noticed that our seasons are getting longer. Many courses open in mid-March and are closing in December or staying open all year. During our season of operation, players expect perfect conditions regardless of the time of year. Early openings and/or late closings put a strain on budgets. The fact is, there are going to be those times when because of weather, budget limitations or whatever, perfect playing conditions are not achievable. Superintendents need to continue to educate players and superiors about how much weather and budget limitations affect course conditions. Players have the right to have great expectations about the courses they play on, but they must also have realistic ones.

The holiday season has come and gone. I hope everyone had time to spend with family and friends. I was lucky enough to take time off and do those little things with my family that I don't get to do during the season. There is nothing better than attending a preschool holiday sing or driving kids to school. I felt like Michael Keaton in *Mr. Mom*. How does my wife do this everyday?

Above all, remember this: Take some time this winter and recharge your batteries so you will be strong enough to face the challenges of 2002.



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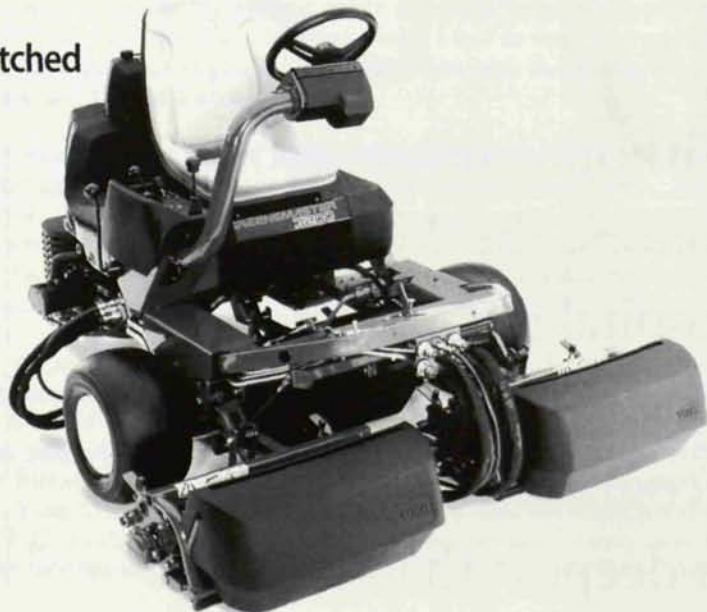
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Put Your Name on the Map: Host a Monthly Golf Meeting

Have you contributed in the last 10 years?

Participating on the Past Presidents Council, our group has the opportunity to review the operations of the MAGCS and observe the trends within our industry. One of our concerns over the last couple of years has been the struggle to get superintendents to host monthly golf meetings. I do not believe that blame for the lack of recruiting success falls entirely on the directors of our Association. In conversations, they claim that securing hosts for golf meetings is like pulling teeth.

Why the reluctance to host a golf event? One common concern is that superintendents don't care to be "under the microscope," so to speak, scrutinized by critics in our own industry.

If one of the main purposes of our Association is to network ideas, strategize and educate for the end result of better golf course management, we are not doing a very good job of instilling confidence in our members to step forward and contribute. Why the reluctance to host a golf event? One common concern is that superintendents don't care to be "under the microscope," so to speak, scrutinized by critics in our own industry. What's the big deal? We are under the watchful eye of our clientele every single day. Everybody has a different management style, and we of all people should understand about the differences in course budgets and should know that every frill has an associated cost. We preach constantly to our bosses about this relationship between costs and conditions. Thanks to the information-sharing that characterizes our industry, the budget constraints of most courses are common knowledge anyway. I remember hosting a meeting at Bartlett Hills Golf Course when the budget was scarce and I felt fortunate to get lunches there for half-price! I did the best I could with what I had to work with and wanted to share the fun experience of playing that golf course with the MAGCS. I hosted a golf meeting and we had a great day.

Don't worry if your course is not as challenging as Butler National. (I wonder what the average handicap of our Association's members is, anyway.) Overall, in the realm of golfing ability, we are not that good. Realize that there is nothing wrong with guests shooting a good score on "your" golf course. I would bet that most of your fondest golf memories are associated with where you had your lowest rounds.

Most of us **do not** own the courses where we work, so why do some superintendents feel like they have to present a difficult golf course in order to gain the respect of their peers? We only work there. When I hosted at River Forest a few years ago, I had the golf course set up relatively easy so everyone would have fun and nobody would leave feeling like he just got mugged in the parking lot. I can't remember too many times that I have felt really good about shooting a high round, even if the course was spectacular. I rarely hear members say how nice the course was after shooting 10 or more over their handicap.

Okay, enough about the critics and the course set-up. Bottom line is, your MAGCS guests are not going to be in on the performance evaluation for

(continued on page 12)

Is There a Troll Under Your Bridge?

I was conversing with a colleague at the Midwest Turf Clinic because I had heard that his club had just spent tens of thousands of dollars on tree removal. He told me that they had contracted for the removal of 35 mature trees throughout the course. I was impressed at the undertaking of such an ambitious project, especially with trees that no doubt had become fixtures on the golf course. When I asked him how he was able to sell the project, he responded, "Fred, I just told them that this kind of thing needs to be done every 100 years or so."



One torched pick-up truck next to a bridge.

Every 100 years or so. Infrastructure is not a very exciting topic. Nobody likes to spend money on the stuff you can't see (especially my wife, but that's a story for another time), but as your site gets on in years you have to be aware of wear-and-tear in items that you may take for granted. How often do you inspect your lake intakes, bridges, rain shelters and security fences? If your golf course is over 10 years old it may be time to take a good, hard look at some of these structures.

A couple of things happened at my place this year that got us very interested in our infrastructure. On July 6, I was greeted upon my arrival at the course by the sight of three police squads and two fire trucks blocking my access to the coffee machine. A flickering glow coming from the general direction of the sixth hole was my first indication that it wasn't going to be a normal morning. That night a couple of vandals had stolen a pick-up truck, four-wheeled around the golf course over several greens and tees, parked the truck next to a bridge and set it on fire. The heat was so intense that the asphalt under the truck actually ignited and the deck and rails of the bridge were charred. As a side note, the culprits were apprehended; apparently they were a part of a larger group causing trouble that night when they broke off to steal the truck, etc. After the dirty deed was done, they called the rest of their companions on a cell phone to brag about their adventure. Unfortunately for them, the police had nabbed the larger group on a traffic violation, and they were actually in custody when the call came in. The police told the buddy to tell the arsonists that he needed a ride, and sure enough, they walked right into the trap.

But I digress. The second event that occurred was the discovery that a bridge that the park district plowed and salted in the winter had corroded to the point where it lost structural integrity and had to be closed and replaced. It was determined at that time that it might be a good idea to get a structural engineer in to inspect **all** of the bridges throughout the park district. I was fairly certain that our bridges at the golf course were okay. After all, we didn't salt them and we replaced the decking on a regular schedule. None of the bridges was more than 25 years old and we had kept records of any repairs.

What I neglected to consider were the parts of the bridges we couldn't see—the footings and foundations. The structural engineer's report revealed several golf course bridges to be in need of serious erosion control at the point where the running water passed along the stream banks. Several factors contribute to erosion: the speed of the water as it passes through the crossing, whether it is funneled or restricted in any way, and how much the stream meanders. Any combination of these conditions in excess causes the rate of erosion to grow exponentially. Once the foundation elements of a bridge are exposed to the moving water, the bridge loses its base and its supporting characteristics are compromised.

Erosion control can be accomplished in several ways, from interlocking sheet-piling in extremely unstable situations to simple rip-rap rock armor along fairly stable creek banks. Once the rate of potential deterioration is established, it

(continued on page 8)



Exposed bridge footing —spalled concrete is caused by the foundation settling.

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becomes fairly easy to determine the best method of remedy. The important thing is to be aware that any situation where moving water is involved is never static.

We were lucky. Our situation was discovered before repair costs became excessive or, more importantly, before anyone got hurt. This is a good time of the year to get down on your hands and knees and check out your infrastructure. You just might find a troll under your bridge.



*Eroded bridge foundation.
Note exposed roots of adjacent tree.*



Cart path erosion.



*The power of
moving water.*



*Eroded creek bank
caused by restricted flow
upstream.*



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GOLF CLUB

The MAGCS monthly meeting for January will make its triumphant return to Arrowhead Golf Course on the 24th, with Bob Breen once again serving as our host. Bob has been at the helm of Arrowhead since taking the reins from his father, Bob Sr., 12 years ago. Combined, the Breens have been caring for Arrowhead for 45 years!

Now for a little course history, which many of you may not know. Original architect Stanley Pelchar designed the track—then named Antlers Country Club—in the mid-1920s (around the time MAGCS was formed) for the Elks Club, the original owners. The Great Depression took its toll on many golf courses at the time, and Antlers C.C. was one of those to go “belly up.” A new owner arrived on the scene, and the first order of business was to change the facility’s name to Arrowhead G.C. From that time, business went on as usual until 1982, when the Wheaton Park District assumed ownership of the course and has been operating it since.

In 1995, the club undertook a major renovation project involving the reconstruction of each of the three nines (greens, tees, bunkers, cart paths—you name it) over the next six years. Architect Ken Killian planned the project this way to keep

18 holes in play throughout the reconstruction. The East nine was done first, followed by the South in '97-'98, and finally the West in '99 – 2000. The most recent improvement is a \$2-million maintenance facility, which Bob is eager to show off, inviting anyone attending the meeting to stop in for a look around. Bob’s fondest wish now is the opportunity to “catch his breath” after these past many years of construction.

Bob and his family—wife Angie, son John (26) and daughter Mary (15)—recently moved to Sugar

Grove where life is (in theory) simpler and quieter. With all the major projects at work behind him, Bob can take the time to enjoy watching Mary pitch varsity softball (as a sophomore) for Kaneland High School and to get a little fishing in here and there. Bob, along with food-and-beverage manager Debbie Enders and all the staff at Arrowhead, look forward to seeing a big MAGCS turnout on January 24.

Remember, make ski plans—a meeting at Arrowhead has ALWAYS included a blizzard! See you there.



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