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# NOVEMBER 2002

Volume 56 No.6

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Looking toward the clubhouse at Medinah Country Club, host site for the 50th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic this November 6.  
(Photo by Jim Trzinski)

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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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# A Round of Thanks

*Well . . . it's finally here, my final president's message. I have had the duty and pleasure of trying to put intelligent thoughts into words once a month for the last 12 months. This has been one of the most difficult tasks I have ever encountered. I have never thought of myself as a good writer, and maybe I am not, but I would like to thank all of you who have said how much you enjoy my page-and-a-half of spell-checked musings that were usually composed at least 48 hours past the due date. As much as I had trouble coming up with topics, it has also been surprisingly fun to write these columns.*

*I was very lucky to be able to work with a group of people who tried their hardest to provide the membership with the best of everything while attending to their own courses, jobs and families.*

So, Luke . . . what else have you done during your tenure as president of the MAGCS? Let me see . . . I put together agendas for meeting after meeting. I spent countless hours on the phone. I was lucky enough to hear about problems with late meeting notices, meeting registration, the price of meetings and just about every other kind of trouble that you can imagine and some you wouldn't be able to imagine.

On the other side of the coin, I was very lucky to be able to work with a group of people who tried their hardest to provide the membership with the best of everything while attending to their own courses, jobs and families. I was able to witness the MAGCS Board of Directors' hard work pay off as we logged another successful year of running our Association. After eight years on the Board, I have learned that it is extremely difficult to please all of our membership. Kevin Czerkies told me as much long ago, but even forewarned it's been a challenge.

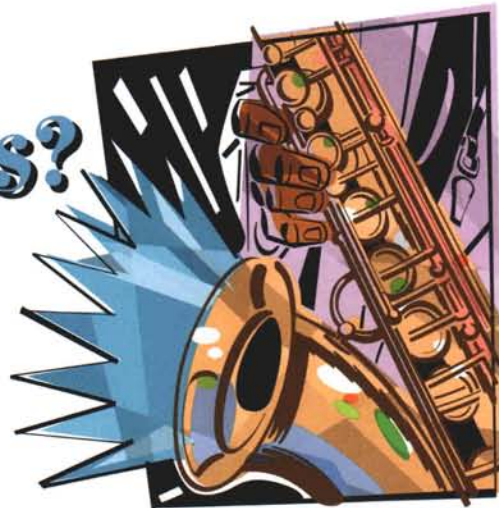
I would be remiss in my presidential duties if I didn't thank and comment on all the individual members of the Board. First, thanks to Kevin DeRoo for his support and willingness to take on anything that wasn't getting done by someone else; to Fred Behnke, who never believed how much work secretary/treasurer was and still was able to keep our money deposited and bills paid; to Tim Anderson, who now has compiled more statistics about the membership than we have ever had; to Dave Braasch, who usually had the longest distance to travel to Board meetings yet kept the Editorial Committee running smoothly; to Luke Cella, who got the opportunity to learn a little about every committee and never complained about having too much to do; to Gary Hearn, for his efforts to keep our education offerings strong and interesting; to Mike Mumper, who was able to secure some of the nicest meeting sites in recent memory and will be missed on the Board; to Phil Zeinert, who I know has had enough of the Golf Committee for awhile but did a great job; to Paul Yerkes, for putting together our hospitality room last February; and to Dave Armentrout, for accepting the appointment of commercial representative and the hard work that entails.

*(continued on page 30)*



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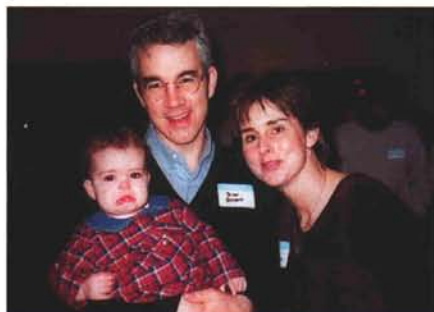
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# Parting Shots On “Being A Part”

*True to form, I'll be getting this to Cathy a few days late. Despite it being early October and the weather being cool and damp, work keeps us hopping. All sorts of projects that we want to complete before the snow flies! Ahhhh, snow—don't you just love the sound of it? The summer flew by, but it was difficult. The hours stack up pretty tall against family and life and the thought of winter is all that keeps me positive some days. I wish everyone a healthy and sane off-season; you deserve it.*



*The Bosserts—Brian, wife Pam and daughter Bailey, pictured here as a happy trio in February 2001—will soon be a family of five!*

Of course, as I complete my year as president emeritus, I have mixed emotions about leaving the Board. Right or wrong, the overwhelming feeling is one of relief. After eight years of direct involvement, I'm looking forward to the change. However, it's in my blood now to be involved and I will be looking for other ways to do so. I've been down the thank-you path in these pages before, but I do sincerely appreciate the opportunity to be of service. I learned a great deal, grew personally and identified plenty of other areas in which I need to grow. I sure can be impatient and unpleasant when my plate is full. However, this experience opened other doors and most important, introduced me to so many wonderful people I wouldn't have gotten to know otherwise. I'm richer for the experience and am grateful.

What will I do with the extra time? In His perfect timing, we're expecting twins in late December. I don't suppose I'll need more than a full-time job and that to keep busy. There are seasons to our job and seasons to life. It appears time spent chasing golf balls and tending to MAGCS tasks will now be better spent chasing two more little ones and tending to stinky diapers. It makes me smile more than snow just thinking about it.



*In June 2001, during Brian's term as president, the CDGA dedicated the Midwest Golf House. Golf House was designed to unite the CDGA and its allied associations under one roof, and the MAGCS has been committed to this endeavor since the beginning.*

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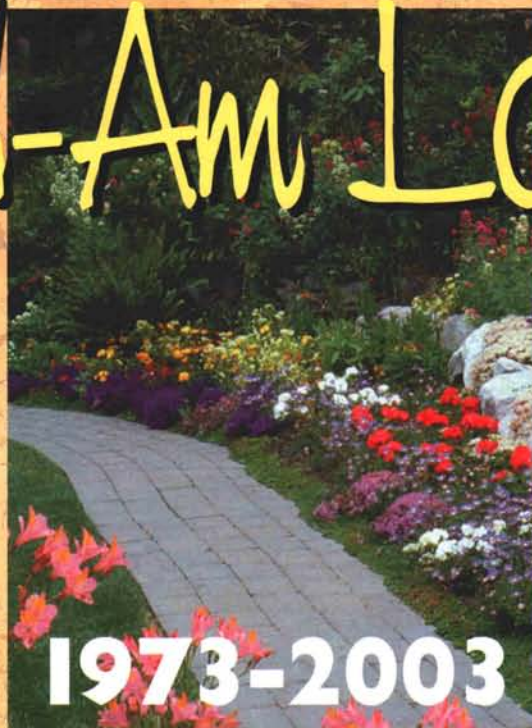


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# The Grassy Knoll: Can We Improve Long-Rough and Naturalized Areas on Golf Courses?

*This photo of Cantigny Youth Links shows a mix of different-height grasses, including some natives like little bluestem.*

*Most new courses today are built with many environmental concerns in mind, including providing or maintaining some "native" or "naturalized" grasslands, savannas/woodlands or wetlands. These areas are intended to provide habitat for wildlife, especially insects, birds, rodents and other small animals. Unfortunately, these areas can be very unfriendly to the average to below-average golfer, especially if the vegetation is long and thick and close to the line of play.*

*You have seen  
"The Look"—the  
mounds, knolls, swales  
and bunker banks in  
transitional areas are  
seeded to fescue mixes  
or blends, and then  
allowed to grow  
unfettered to seed head  
formation.*

On most holes, what we see is a gradual transition from fairway to intermediate rough to a primary or long rough, which might be unmowed or rarely mowed. On newer courses in Illinois, the long-rough or naturalized areas often consist of a blend of fine and/or tall fescues, or a bluegrass/ryegrass/other grass blend. These long-rough areas are meant to invoke the look and feel of Scottish links golf; in fact, one of the popular fescue seed blends is called "Scottish Links." You have seen "The Look"—the mounds, knolls, swales and bunker banks in transitional areas are seeded to fescue mixes or blends, and then allowed to grow unfettered to seed head formation. If you hit your ball into those tall, thick grasses, you know how penalizing this form of rough can be.

Many older clubs have also abandoned expansive mowed rough areas to establish unmowed naturalized vegetation, usually Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue and ryegrass. Besides going for "The Look" that newer courses have, many older courses also want to provide more natural habitat for wildlife. A major contributor to this move to unmowed roughs and "naturalized" vegetation has been the International Audubon Society and their Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf courses. It's been good for

*(continued on page 10)*



bugs and birds, but maybe not so good for those of us who stray from the fairway!!!

But does growing fescues or blue/rye blends to full height really work for long roughs in Illinois? Of course, there are issues of lost balls and slow play—most “naturalized” areas are now marked or played as lateral hazards, to avoid the stroke and distance, lost-ball rule. But weed control and other aesthetic concerns are also issues, because of invasive species like Canada thistle, clover, chicory and Queen Anne’s lace. These aggressive aliens can out-compete desired grasses and increase the labor and chemical costs for their removal. Moreover, selectively controlling these broad-leaved weeds in mixed grass/forb plantings is particularly difficult.

Since “naturalized” fescue roughs have come into fashion, superintendents have shared a number of other concerns with us. For example, thinning and death of fine fescues have occurred in sites that remain too wet or consist of heavy, compacted, poorly drained soils. Most of these fescues are better adapted to dry sites with light (sandy) soils than to wet, clayey soils (Illinois is not Scotland!). Long roughs that are in wet sites or have heavy, compacted soils will probably be more successful if other plant species (grasses and forbs) are established there.

More recently, another question has come to light. Several Chicago-area superintendents have requested information on the possibility of creating unmowed but still playable roughs. There is a growing desire for rough areas that are tall and rarely mowed (and have “The Look”), but are also thin or “open” enough to find your ball and play a recovery shot.

At present, we have no answers to these questions and finding a solution could be a difficult task. Here is WHY. For the most part, our soils hold moisture and have decent fertility. Plenty of weed seeds from the soil “seed bank” are waiting to move in from surrounding unmaintained

(continued on page 12)

Table 1.  
Ornamental exotic and native grasses for rough areas (tentative list).

<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big Bluestem
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Side-oats Grama
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	Blue Grama
<i>Calamagrostis x acutiflora</i> ‘Karl Foerster’	Karl Foerster’s Feather Reed Grass
<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Bluejoint
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Northern Sea-oats
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair Grass
<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Canada Wild Rye
<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	Purple Love Grass
<i>Festuca glauca</i> ‘Elijah Blue’	‘Elijah Blue’ Blue Fescue
<i>Helictotrichon sempervirens</i>	Blue Oat Grass
<i>Hierochloa odorata</i>	Vanilla Grass
<i>Hordeum jubatum</i>	Foxtail barley
<i>Hystrix patula</i>	Bottle-brush Grass
<i>Miscanthus ‘Giganteus’</i>	Giant Miscanthus
<i>Miscanthus ‘Purpurascens’</i>	Flamegrass
<i>Miscanthus sinensis ‘Gracillimus’</i>	Maiden Grass
<i>Miscanthus sinensis ‘Sarabande’</i>	Sarabande miscanthus
<i>Miscanthus sinensis ‘Variegatus’</i>	Variegated miscanthus
<i>Miscanthus sinensis ‘Zebrinus’</i>	Zebra Grass
<i>Panicum virgatum ‘Dallas Blues’</i>	Dallas Blues Switch Grass
<i>Panicum virgatum ‘Heavy Metal’</i>	Heavy metal Switch Grass
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides ‘Hameln’</i>	Hameln Fountain Grass
<i>Phalaris arundinacea ‘Picta’</i>	Gardener’s Garters Ribbon Grass
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed
<i>Saccharum ravennae</i>	Ravenna Grass
<i>Schizachyrium scoparius</i>	Little Bluestem
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian Grass
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Prairie Cord Grass
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie Dropseed



This photo of Orchard Valley shows tall fescue and fine fescue on mounds. This and the shot of Cantigny reflect a couple different ways that newer courses are striving for “The Look” of naturalized, pseudo-prairie, Scottish links (what architect Dick Nugent originally dubbed Prairie Links golf).