

I left Chris and later heard about the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania. Shortly after that, one of the best decisions of that day was made by President Bush . . . all commercial aircraft is grounded indefinitely.

The rest of that morning was spent bouncing around the golf course, catching radio reports and looking south towards Milwaukee. I had a nervous feeling that World War III might soon start and why not level that city while they are bombing everything else. I thought about my wife and kids. They were an hour-and-a-half away. *What if this is it? Don't worry, I told myself, we're in God's hands.* It's time to pray for our leaders and our country.

It was nearing lunch time when Chris called my cell phone.

"One of the towers collapsed, hold on!" He had the radio on in his Jeep.

"The other tower just caved in too!"

"Meet me by the office, let's grab some lunch." I couldn't wait to get in his Jeep and listen to the reports. I couldn't imagine what was happening in New York. By now, thousands of people had died and the entire area was engulfed in flames.

By afternoon, things settled down; at least the planes stopped bombing us. I still had no idea of the magnitude of the destruction, only reports from Chris and the radio. I heard President Bush was going to speak to the nation at 7:30 p.m. So I finished all my chores, made sure everything was getting watered and hustled to my hotel room. I quickly flipped on the TV and sat there mesmerized for hours.

Our new President was faced with an enormous challenge, and he called upon the people of this nation to bond together in spirit, support and prayer. I saw heroes living, and heroes dying. I saw a huge monument to the prosperity of this country collapse in a fireball of smoke and rubble. And I saw an aircraft do something I had never, ever consid-

ered possible. They replayed that scene over and over again that night. And I watched over and over, and I still couldn't believe it.

I'm not too old, but old enough to have had some tragedies in my life. And as I have "aged," I have come to discover that something good comes, even in the worst situations. That night, as my reddened eyes closed, I fell asleep with that thought.

As the news unfolded the following days, my thoughts became statements and I boldly proclaimed that something good will come of this. And it did. Neighbors became neighbors again. People met in town squares, held hands, mourned and prayed. And people went to church . . . and prayed. Prayed for strangers they did not know. Prayed for the leaders of this country. Prayed for understanding. And prayed for peace.

I do not want to be misunderstood in what I am about to say. I feel very, very sorry for all of those who lost their lives and loved ones. But every once in a while, the American people need to have their eyes opened. We are more vulnerable than we think. Yes, we live in the greatest nation in the world, but we are just one nation in a world full of divergent ideologies, despair and trouble.

Since September 11th, nothing tragic has happened in our nation . . . except for a moderate recession. But why did this recession happen? Some say that we were heading in that direction anyway and this incident only accelerated the fall. Others say it was the fear of traveling. The President asked us to "Go shopping! Travel, please have no fear!" You know what? George was right! I do not agree with every move our President has made so far, but I do happen to believe in the same God as he does. And for the life of me, I cannot understand why people at that time were so fearful of flying. If it is your time to die, it is your time to die. Whether it be on an airplane, behind the wheel of your car, while you're shoveling snow or deep in sleep. And you know what? There is nothing you can do about it.

God only allows us so much time on this earth. The great thing about September 11th was the forging of the American spirit. The tragedy is the corruption of that spirit. It has been a full year since this event occurred. I have begun to see the feathers fall off as the eagle soars. Complacency again begins to weave its web around us. We cannot let that happen! Too many have died already! We need to remember those in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania. That tragedy will be remembered forever.

But we also need to remember those who died in Hawaii. We need to remember those who fought for this country, those teens that went to other nations, fought battles over the years . . . and never returned. Those men *willingly* gave their lives for us.

I heard stories and saw documentaries relating to World War II. I have read some of the great novels written about war. In fact, I used to work at Cantigny Golf, which is also the home of the Cantigny War Memorial Museum. Quite a place to see if you are ever in Wheaton, Illinois. But all of this historic background never became more poignant until I saw the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*. If you are not moved to tears at some point in the movie, then something is sadly wrong and complacency has slowly woven into your heart.

The men in that movie portrayed the courage of the American spirit. They fought, just as every soldier in every war ever has. And they died. They died for us and our country. I consider this one of the greatest blessings my God has given me. Life in this country, America.

So let us show love and respect to our elders, our parents, our mentors and our children. Let us learn to live fearlessly, trusting in God and all the blessings that he has given to us who live in this beautiful and most blessed land. And the next time you see a police officer, a firefighter or a soldier on guard at the airport, walk up to him or her, grab his hand and say "Thank you!"



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Fred Opperman, Retired

It is once again that time of the year when we announce those whose contribution(s) to On Course qualified them for consideration for the Ray Gerber Editorial Award. Articles eligible for the 2002 award must be written by a member of the MAGCS who is currently a golf course superintendent. All articles published in On Course between September 2001 and August 2002 that meet this requirement will be considered; however, "On Course with the President," "Director's Column," and "Super-N-Site" articles are not eligible. Articles originally published elsewhere and then published in On Course are not eligible for the award.

Year/Month	Article	Author
2001		
September	"A Tale of Two Seventies"	Jim McNair
October	"Employee Orientation—It's A Start"	Tim Anderson
	75 th Anniversary Retrospective	
	"The 'Radical' 1980s"	Shane Kissack
November	"Soul Food: Voykin's Russian Borscht"	Paul Voykin
	75 th Anniversary Retrospective	
	"The Nineties: Golf's Boom Parallels America's Prosperity"	Jon Jennings
	"A Thanksgiving Reflection: Profound Gratitude"	Dan Murray
December	"MAGCS—A Vision for the Future"	Mike Bavier
2002		
January	"Is There a Troll Under Your Bridge"	Fred Behnke
February	"Domes on the Rise"	Gary Hearn
March	"Improving Your Fairways With Topdressing"	Jonathan S. Jennings
	"The Language of Statistics"	Luke Cella
April	"Just Do It! Your Guide to Navigating the Improved MAGCS Web Site"	Luke Cella
May	"Make Your Golf Course a Sanctuary"	Tim Anderson
June	"Low-Voltage Lighting: The Other White Light"	Scott Speiden
July	Ozone Action Days in Golf Course Management	Bob McCallum
	Get Pumped! Case Studies in Pump-Station Replacement	Jon Jennings
August	None	

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