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Beautiful Fox Bend Golf Course, where superintendent Bob Kohlstedt will host April's monthly golf meeting. (Photo by Jim Trzinski)

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A Model of Strength Through Adversity: Our Own George Minnis

As president of this fine Association, it is one of my responsibilities to report to the membership on the inner workings of the Midwest. An ideal venue for this is obviously my monthly president's message in On Course. Ordinarily at this juncture, I would be recapping the GCSAA International Conference and Show, the Midwest Hospitality Room, the GCSAA Golf Championship and the GCSAA election. But at this time, I would like to share some news that is more compelling than all of the above.

*Somewhere along
the way I once
heard, "Facing
adversity can
build character,
but dealing with
adversity will
build strength."
If that is true,
then there is no
stronger man
I know than
George.*

Since the mid-1990s, a name has surfaced in our organization that everyone knows, but a rare few have actually met the person behind the name. I am speaking, of course, about our very own George Minnis. His title is executive secretary for the MAGCS, but a title cannot do justice to what this individual means to our organization. During my years as a director on the Board, and now as president, I have always realized his importance to our Association. And shamefully, I will have to admit to taking his abilities, and his attention to his myriad responsibilities, for granted. Among my typical responses to member questions has been one recurring theme: "Well, I will have to get back to you on that, I have to ask George." Or, "Call George, he'll know." And my favorite, of course: "George does that."

To say that George is the main gear around which the entire MAGCS revolves, would be an understatement. As would comparing him to the shaft that makes the gear run, or the engine that turns the shaft, or the fuel that makes the engine run, or the spark that ignites the fuel. But to say that he is all of those would be close to putting things in the proper perspective. Simply put, for the Midwest he is Command Central in Charge of Information Distribution. He is now and has been for years the clearinghouse by which all Association functions are performed.

Somewhere along the way I once heard, "Facing adversity can build character, but dealing with adversity will build strength." If that is true, then there is no stronger man I know than George. Many of us have known for years now that George, while performing his duties for us, many times putting Association business before his own, has been quietly dealing with his own health issues. Just after he took over as our executive secretary, George was first diagnosed with cancer. Over the years, he has been through a regime of chemotherapy, radiation and any other new experimental drug that happened to surface. Some of these practices worked, some did not. Through all of this, he never once dished off his responsibilities for MAGCS. Recently, another cancerous lesion appeared. This one lodged in George's spine. After several unsuccessful attempts to eradicate the lesion, the doctors have informed

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HOTlanta Indeed!

I was recently asked to fill the position of commercial representative on the MAGCS Board of Directors. Initially, I was going to fill in temporarily until Dave Armentrout was back in full swing, but that didn't pan out as planned. As some of you may know, Dave suffered from a heart attack late last year and has since resigned both from the Board and from TPEC Chicago. Dave will be moving to Denver to be closer to his two kids, and we wish him the best of luck.

... the hospitality suite was again a success and a record-breaking event. The ongoing existence and success of this event are comprised of many factors. These factors include vendor contributions and the time and effort it takes to make it all happen.

So, how was the hospitality suite in Atlanta, you ask? By all accounts, it seems the hospitality suite was again a success and a record-breaking event. The ongoing existence and success of this event are comprised of many factors. These factors include vendor contributions and the time and effort it takes to make it all happen. I'd like to first take this opportunity to thank the 52 Golden Tee participants that contributed a total of \$30,100. Wow! Their continued support of the MAGCS chapter is sincerely and greatly appreciated; without their financial commitment, this event would not be possible. Please take a moment to look at the full-page thank-you letter listing this year's Golden Tee Club sponsors that will appear in several issues of *On Course* this year. In addition to sponsor contributions, I'd also like to recognize Paul Yerkes of LESCO and Tim Anderson of Prestwick Country Club for their time and commitment in planning and organizing this year's party.

The event was well-attended, with estimates of 350 to 400 people per night. As I mentioned, there were a few record-breaking numbers. Again, we had (1) 52 Golden Tee participants, contributing (2) \$30,100, and the MAGCS chapter contributing an additional (3) \$10,000, bringing the budget for this year's two-day party to an impressive (4) \$40,100. The total cost of the event was (5) \$42,565, which overextended the budget by \$2,465. The answer to this year's trivia question of how many drinks were served is 3,313. Something tells me the Midwest chapter likes to have a good time . . .

And finally, I wanted to take a minute to again congratulate Dudley Smith for receiving the GCSAA's 2003 Distinguished Service Award.

That's it, ladies and gentleman. As a "newbie" to the Association, I look forward to meeting all of you in the near future.



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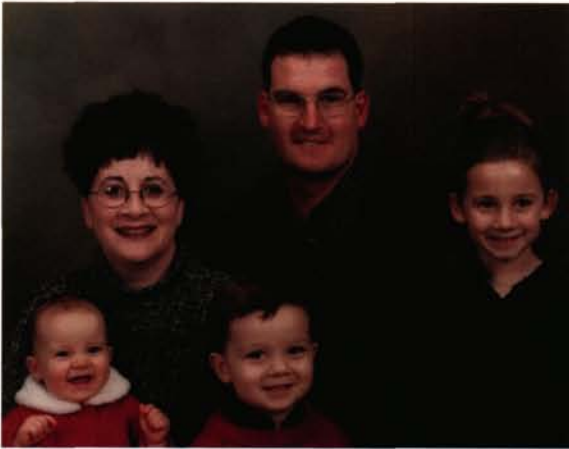
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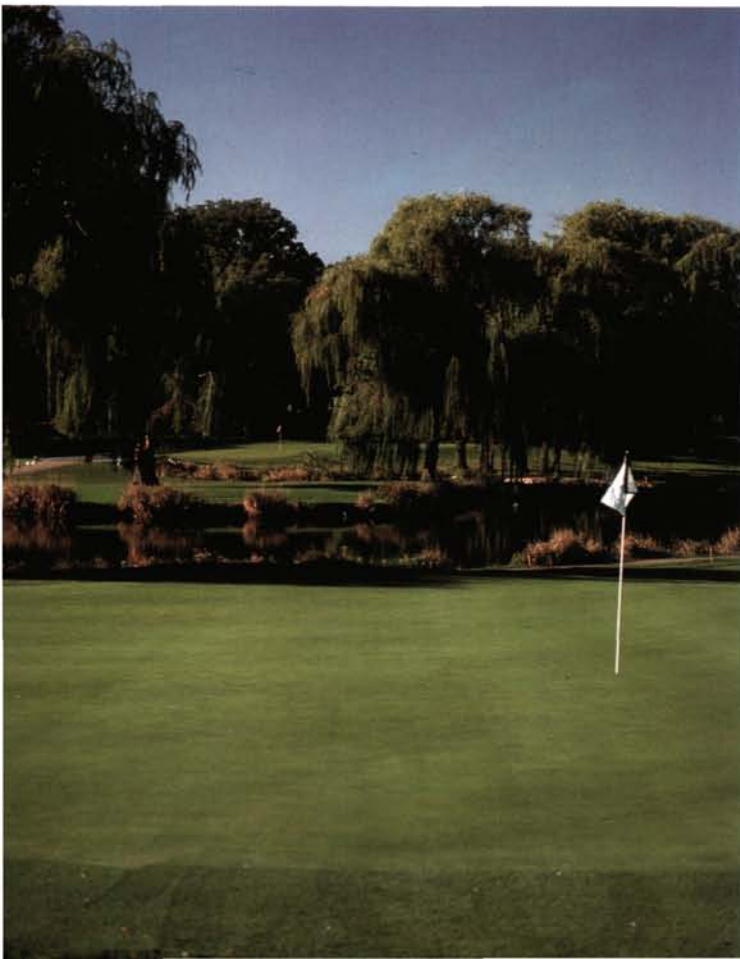


Robyn and Bob Kohlstedt with children
(L to R) Kyra, RJ and Kelli.



The MAGCS golf season begins this month at Fox Bend Golf Course in Oswego, with Bob Kohlstedt hosting. Bob began his career washing dishes at Silver Lake Country Club in the 1980s. In 1989, he—like many fortunate others—had the opportunity to be mentored by former MAGCS president and 2003 GCSAA Distinguished Service Award winner Dudley Smith. After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1991, Bob became the assistant to Jack McCormick at Calumet Country Club until 1997. At that time, Bob became the superintendent at Wedgewood Golf Club, where he worked until he became the super at Fox Bend in 2000.

hoto by Jim Trzinski



Fox Bend was built by renowned golf course builder Brent Wadsworth in 1967 and owned by Wadsworth (with partner Bill Monier) from 1967 until 1980. During that span, Fox Bend served as a showcase for the Wadsworth Golf Course Construction Company, and an experimental farm of different types of irrigation, drainage and grass types. At one time, there were even demonstration plots of different bent varieties and creeping fescues, five fairways with different hybrids of grasses and three greens with different hybrids of bentgrass. These varieties of turf and irrigation became quite a challenge over the years and have since been homogenized through several remodelings. As a result, Bob probably smiles more and is a lot more easy-going than a certain former Fox Bend superintendent (the author of this piece).

In 1980, the Fox Valley and Oswegoland park districts jointly purchased Fox Bend. Since then, a new irrigation system was installed and a major remodeling was completed in 1995. A new par 3 (no. 15) and par 4 (no. 17) were built, along with changes to 14 other holes. During Bob's tenure, he has also made improvements to the driving range, built a six-acre berm, renovated bunkers,

(continued on page 9)

*Built in 1967, Fox Bend
has since undergone a
major remodeling, in 1995.*



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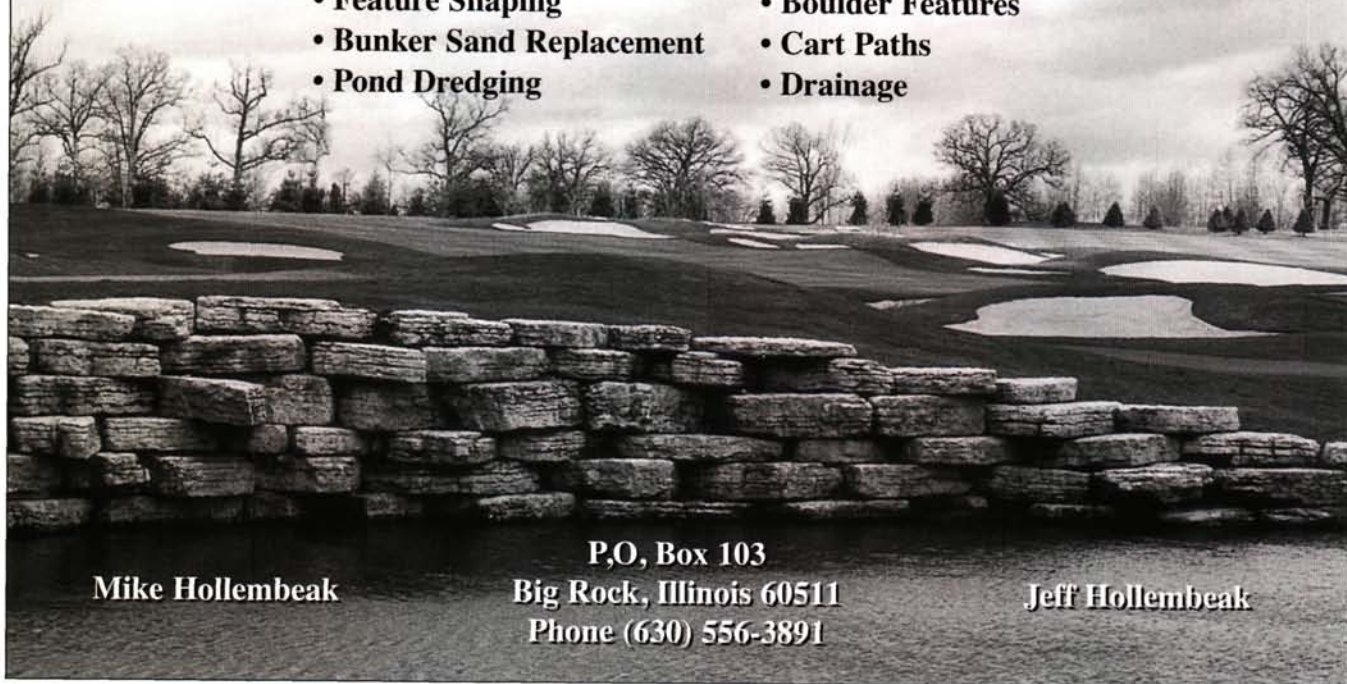
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remodeled the ninth hole, installed cart paths, built new tees and completed the construction of a new maintenance facility. This season, Bob plans on continuing the bunker renovation project and replacing a bridge across Waubensee Creek.

Bob and his wife, Robyn, live in Joliet with their three children: Kelli (7), RJ (2) and Kyra (1). Bob enjoys spending time with his family and when time permits, you may also find him golfing, fishing or snowmobiling (well, maybe not this past year). Bob also enjoys spending time in the kitchen. His favorite dishes to prepare are "anything with garlic and onions, especially Italian cuisine."


So join your friends at Fox Bend on April 21st and see what Bob's been cooking! 



Photo by Jim Trzinski

Superintendent Bob Kohlstedt has undertaken an ongoing bunker renovation project at Fox Bend.

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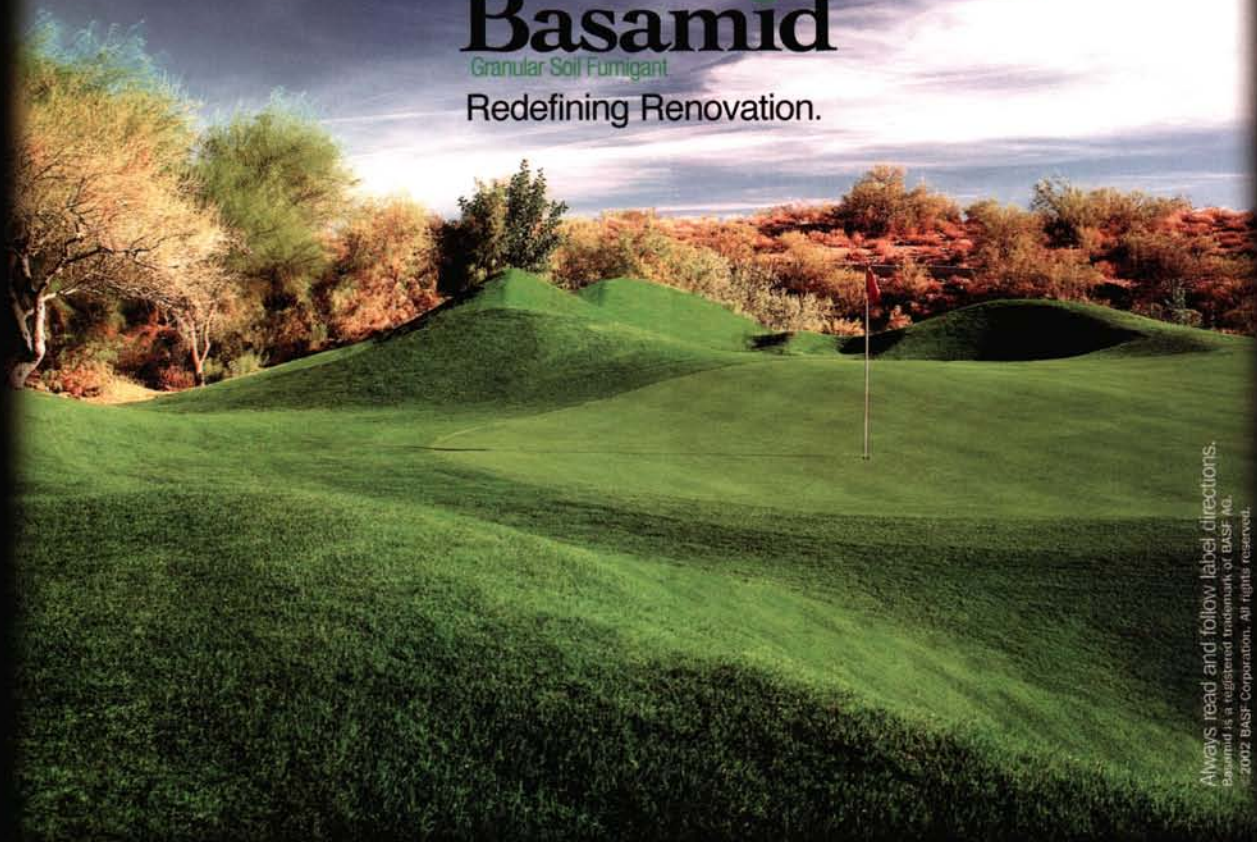
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