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FRONT COVER

Dudley Smith, longtime superintendent at beautiful Silver Lake Country Club and president of the MAGCS in 1967, has earned the GCSAA's illustrious Distinguished Service Award.

(Inset photo by Bill Ficht; golf course 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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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Kevin DeRoo *Bartlett Hills Golf Course*

Beyond Breaking Even

Another new year is upon us and we look toward the future to predict what 2003 shall bring. As golf course superintendents located in the Midwest, it is a time for some much needed R & R. Frankly, as far as I can tell, our off-season seems to be getting shorter and shorter. During this time, many of us work on our respective budgets for the upcoming year. The MAGCS is no different in that respect. The new year is a new beginning for our Association as well. The MAGCS Executive Committee, consisting of myself, Fred Behnke, Phil Zeinert and Luke Strojny, just completed ironing out this year's MAGCS budgetary process. Having been a part of this undertaking for the last couple of years, I thought things would get easier. Unfortunately, in light of these difficult economic times, such was not the case. As with the nation's economy, growth (8% increase last year) has come with a cost to our Association.

Advice from our accounting firm, which oversees the financial inner workings of our Association, suggests that an organization of our size should have a cash reserve of 20 to 25% of our total budget. We currently have approximately 10% of our total budget in cash reserves.

Although I see the increase in membership as a positive for the entire Association, it comes with some drawbacks as well. Covering additional costs related to a growing association seems to be the one battle that will never end. As a not-for-profit organization, our goal each year is to present a balanced budget. This year's budget, approved by the Board of Directors in early January, is approximately \$325,000, a 2% increase over last year. Advice from our accounting firm, which oversees the financial inner workings of our Association, suggests that an organization of our size should have a cash reserve of 20 to 25% of our total budget. We currently have approximately 10% of our total budget in cash reserves. Keeping that in mind, it is obvious that curtailing unnecessary expenditures to control costs without hindering membership services is of the utmost importance.

The other side of the expenditure coin is, of course, income. The MAGCS' largest revenue source comes from *On Course* advertising purchased by our commercial members and other vendors. The money raised from advertising, however, pays exclusively for the expenses generated in producing such an outstanding publication. Our second-largest revenue source is your dues. Approximately \$80,000 will be raised from 2003 membership dues. With *On Course* and monthly golf and education meetings essentially paying for themselves, it is amazing we accomplish as much as we do with limited revenue sources. Currently, the member services that are paid from revenues accumulated from membership dues include: the benevolence fund, Board of Directors and committee meetings, salary for our executive secretary, legal and accounting fees, postage and printing costs, Web page management, office supplies, telephone service and research contributions. This revenue also subsidizes the Kane County Cougar outing, the Fall Dinner Dance and the annual Hospitality Suite at the GCSAA International Turf Conference and Trade Show.

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There's Room For You Around The Piano


My family spent some time at my folks' house for the holidays. At my age, I'm very fortunate to still have both my mom and dad in pretty good health, but truth be told, it's beginning to be apparent that time is taking its toll. They're moving around a little bit slower and the medicine chest is now two drawers chock full of medications and dietary supplements. Nevertheless, one of our holiday traditions is to gather around and sing Christmas carols while my mom plays the piano. Mom plays pretty well, but she doesn't practice so there are a few clinkers, and the rest of us will never make it on "Star Search" or "American Idol" with our singing voices, but you know, we sound awesome when we sing those carols. Or at least we think so, and really that's all that matters.

The strength of this Association has always been its membership's willingness to step up and put a little of themselves into the mix. If we are going to keep moving forward and growing, we absolutely need this spirit to continue.

I'm the greybeard on your MAGCS Board of Directors (BOD). Consistent with so much that I've done, I got a late start on the leadership track. Married at 30, superintendent at 36, fathered my last child at 40, elected to your BOD at 43, I'm hopeful of finding the time to take my certification exam this year at 50. I'm your living and breathing example of "it's never too late to get started." This year, I'm your vice president, fondly referred to as "the junk drawer" of the MAGCS. If something comes up that doesn't fit into one of the standing committees, (and the president doesn't want to do it), it usually becomes the business of the VP. That, along with handing out three scholarships and handling the job referrals, comprises the VP's job and that's okay. It sure beats being secretary/treasurer—that was real work!

I've been on the BOD long enough to have been associated with some very talented people, men of profound intelligence, great leaders and gifted organizers. Just being around some of these people has enriched me and taught me valuable lessons that have aided me both professionally and personally. By the same token, many of us Board members have been able to succeed in managing this Association by (1) not falling behind and (2) using common sense—two attributes ALL golf course superintendents must have. My point is, you don't have to be a genius or a great leader of men to contribute—just look at your current BOD (sorry guys – it's not personal).

The MAGCS is simply the best "club" I've been a part of. Nowhere else have I been blessed with lasting relationships that have returned so much for the time invested. The strength of this Association has always been its membership's willingness to step up and put a little of themselves into the mix. If we are going to keep moving forward and growing, we absolutely need this spirit to continue. Please consider hosting a golf meeting or participating on a committee. If you don't know how to get started, just give me a call and we'll chat.

God has granted everyone a different set of tools to accomplish their life's work. You've got something we need. There is always room for you to join the chorus around the piano—you know we sound awesome. 

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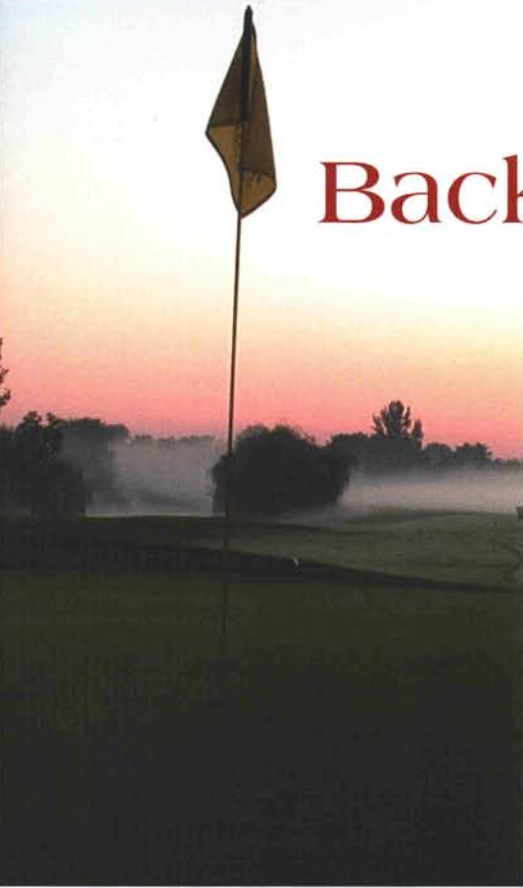
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Back-Middle-Front . . . Where Is Your Hole Today?



A golf course superintendent has at his or her disposal many ways through which to provide hole locations on a daily basis. Many different systems have been invented and employed to allow the golfer to know the general location of the hole on a putting green on a specific day. As golf course superintendents, to what lengths should we go to give the golfer this information?

Pin Sheets

One system, and the most precise, allows the golfer to know the exact location of the hole on each putting green. This is the pin sheet. The pin sheet is a document that portrays each individual green and the number of paces front to back and left to right or right to left, if you prefer, to the hole placement for that day. (See image 1.) Drawbacks to this system include taking the time to pace off the locations, writing them down, transcribing to a legible format and photocopying for all to use. It also helps to have the same person pace off the locations from day to day as all "paces" are not equal. Preparing a pin sheet for daily play may not be an option at many courses, however a superintendent should not hesitate to offer pin sheets for special-play days. The pin sheet can be a great public relations tool for you and your staff. Put your name on it and take credit for the conditions you provide. Pin sheets, from the standpoint of the golfer, are more desirable than any other form of hole-location scheme.

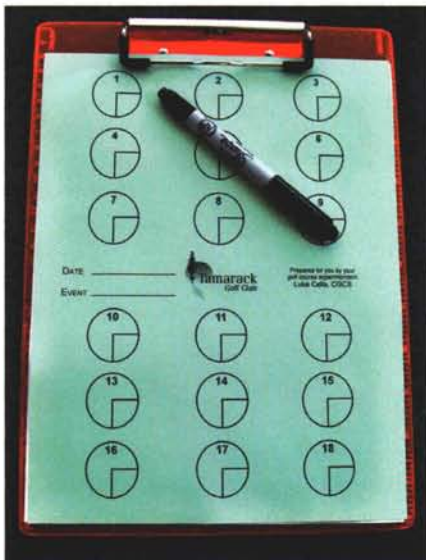


Image 1: The pin sheet.

Scheduling Techniques

Fixed schedules are another way to represent hole locations for a day. The schedule system is not as precise as the pin sheet, but does offer the next level of relaying pertinent information. The hole schedule rotates with each day. Each day is given a symbol to represent it; for my example, I'll use the numbers 1 through 6. Each number represents a set schedule of hole locations for each day on each specific golf hole. (See figure 1.) The green is usually divided into six areas or divisions: left front (LF), right front (RF), left middle (LM), right middle (RM), left back (LB), right back (RB). As each day changes, so does the schedule. One drawback to this method of hole loca-

(continued on page 10)

tion information is that each player has to know the correct day and the correct schedule for that day. It works best when the majority of players use golf carts and the schedules can be attached to each cart and rotated by attentive staff members. Another drawback to this method is setting up the hole-rotation method. It would seem to be fairly easy, but most golf courses have greens where there are fewer than six hole divisions due to slopes or other anomalies.

DAY 1		DAY 2	
HOLE	LOCATION	HOLE	LOCATION
1	LF	1	RF
2	RB	2	LB
3	LM	3	RB
4	RM	4	LM
5	LB	5	RM
6	RF	6	LB
7	LF	7	RF
8	RB	8	LF
9	LM	9	RB
10	RM	10	LM
11	LB	11	RM
12	RF	12	LB
13	LF	13	RF
14	RB	14	LF
15	LM	15	RB
16	RM	16	LM
17	LB	17	RM
18	RF	18	LB

Figure 1. Examples of set schedules for hole locations. Day 1 begins with the hole on the first green cut in the left front (LF) position. The schedule rotates to Day 2 on the next day, and so on.

Placement Flags and Grommets

The next method of hole location has been around for a while and is commercially available through most golf course amenity suppliers. They are known as pin indicator or placement flags. (See image 2.) These are very simple devices that enable the golfer to differentiate a front, middle or back hole location by the relative position of a small flag on the flagstick. A hole in the front of a green flies the small flag on the lower third of the flagstick, a middle hole location flies the small flag in the middle of the flagstick and you guessed it, a back hole location flies the small flag on the top third of the flagstick. There are a few drawbacks to this system. The grommet that holds the indicator flag up often wears out and slips, causing

inaccurate placement of the small flag. One remedy to this situation is to purchase grommets one size smaller than the diameter of the flagstick used. It might be more difficult for the staff to slide the indicator flag up and down, but accidental movement of the flag will be limited. Another remedy to this is to drill holes into the actual flagstick and use a cotter key to hold the indicator flag in its correct position. (See image 3.)



Image 2: Pin indicator, or placement, flags.



Image 3: Try using a cotter key to hold the placement flag in the correct position.

The Country's or Club's Colors

It seems the method that is most popular currently enables the

use of different-colored flags to represent hole locations. The red (front), white (middle) and blue (back) color scheme seems to be of choice at most golf courses. This is another system that is simple and gives the golfer ample information on hole location. Drawbacks to this method include the staff having to carry extra flags and changing them at each hole. Some will even carry complete flags and sticks from green to green as part of the rotation. Flags can get dirty, flagsticks banged up and the green that somehow needs a different color flag is always the farthest from the maintenance facility. If your club uses a flag with a logo, then three different flag colors need to be on hand, all with the logo, for the occasions when things are missing in the morning. It can be costly to maintain an inventory of "logoed" flags with minimum orders taken by suppliers.

A New Twist on the Red, White and Blue for Everyday Play

We used to employ the red, white and blue flag system at Tamarack, but necessity made us look elsewhere for a new system to advertise the hole location for each day. The flag fairy's evil twin visited our course weekly and always took the color flag and flagstick we had least of in stock. We wanted to keep the system simple but still provide the general location of the hole.

At Tamarack, we employ the use of 150-yard markers in the middle of our fairways. We use the Standard Golf® Company's Fairway Marking Pole (item no. 09700). And with a little retrofitting, this has now become the base to hold our new hole-location indicators. (See image 4.) The mini-flagsticks were constructed out of old flagsticks cut short and fitted with top studs (Par Aide® no 1732) to each end. One end was permanently fastened onto a new PVC cap via a locknut and then the whole cap was glued to the pole. The indicator flags are purchased 1/2" diameter practice green flags in sets of red, white and blue. (See image 5.) The system is the same; the golfer just looks elsewhere for the information.