

grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites very happy.

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it has grown a little, they cut it—sometimes two times a week.

GOD: They cut it? Why? Do they bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS: No sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now let me get this straight. They fertilize it to make it grow and when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS: Yes, sir.

GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense! At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep the moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves are compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

ST. FRANCIS: You'd better sit down, Lord. As soon as the leaves fall, the Suburbanites rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD: No way! What do they do to protect the shrubs and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS: After throwing the leaves away they go out and buy something called mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS: They cut down the trees and grind them up to make mulch.

GOD: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE: *Dumb and Dumber*, Lord. It's a real stupid movie about . . .

GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis!



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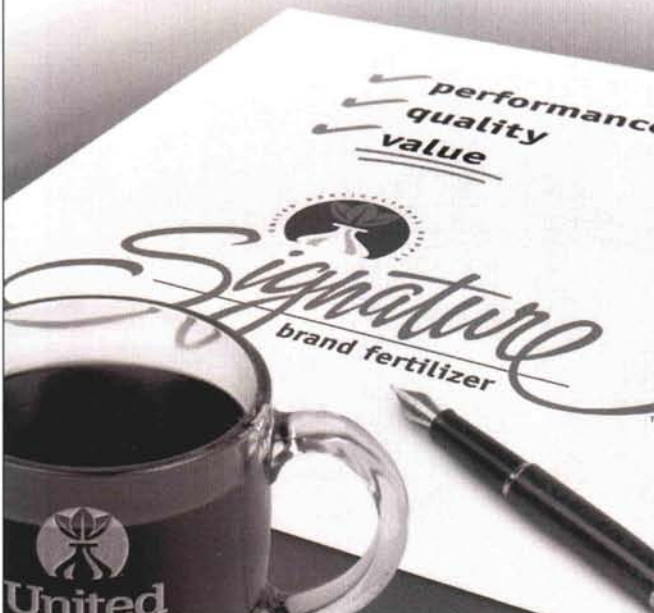
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Dudley and wife Marlene.

GCSAA Recognizes Dudley Smith For Distinguished Service

The news flash first came to MAGCS membership on November 6, 2002 at the 50th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic: Dudley Smith—longtime golf course superintendent at Silver Lake Country Club and past president of the Midwest in 1967—would receive the GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award for 2003.

A Midwest member last earned this distinction three years ago, in 2000, when Michael Bavier, CGCS of Inverness Country Club was recognized for exceptional service. The following are excerpts from the GCSAA's official news release on the 2003 Distinguished Service Awards. In the meantime, congratulations, Dudley! We'll be there in Atlanta to cheer you on!

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has selected Robert D. Emmons, Joel D. Jackson, CGCS and Dudley H. Smith as recipients of the association's Distinguished Service Award. Each will be acknowledged at the Opening Session of GCSAA's 74th International Golf Course Conference and Show, February 12, 2003 in Atlanta.

The GCSAA Board of Directors, from nominations by affiliated chapters and/or association members, selects Distinguished Service Award winners. First presented in 1932, the award is given to individuals who have made an outstanding, substantive and enduring contribution to the advancement of the golf course superintendent profession.

"GCSAA succeeds because of the dedication and hard work of its members, educators and industry supporters. The association is proud to honor Bob Emmons, Joel Jackson and Dudley Smith with GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award," said GCSAA president Michael Wallace, CGCS. "Their contributions to the game of golf and to the advancement of the golf course superintendent profession certainly merit this award."

Dudley H. Smith, retired golf course superintendent and former president of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS) and the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, has been a longtime superintendent and a powerful, positive influence in the Chicago area. Smith served as superintendent at Silver Lake Country Club in metropolitan Chicago for more than 40 years, which made him the senior practicing superintendent in the area. His active role in the golf course management industry has been evident in his service to the Musser Foundation, which provides scholarships to doctoral candidates in the turfgrass field, and in his founding of the Charles Bartlett Award, which recognizes high levels of service excellence in the MAGCS.

(continued on page 24)



Dudley in 1964.

Robert D. Emmons, a professor in the Plant Science Department at the State University of New York (SUNY) Agricultural and Technical College at Cobleskill, is a former golf course superintendent. He plays an influential role in the education and development of future and current golf course superintendents. He has received a Citation of Merit from the New York State Turfgrass Association and a Certificate of Merit from the USDA. Because of his personal, one-on-one approach to mentoring at SUNY Cobleskill, Emmons' students are highly sought after in the marketplace. In 1985, Emmons created and taught the first Integrated Pest Management (IPM) course in the northeast United States. Also in 1985, he published a textbook entitled *Turfgrass Science Management*. The textbook has become a leading resource in turfgrass education. Emmons also has influenced current superintendents by having presented more than 200 lectures at conferences throughout the Northeast.

Joel D. Jackson, CGCS, director of communications for the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association (GCSA), editor of *The Florida Green* magazine and retired golf course superintendent, has been a powerful voice for golf course superintendents in the Florida area and across the country. Jackson joined the staff of the Florida GCSA in 1998 after a long and distinguished career as a golf course superintendent. Under his direction as *The Florida Green* editor and director of communications at the Florida GCSA, the publication has received top honors in the annual GCSAA Publications Contest for 11 consecutive years. On a monthly basis, Jackson provides stirring editorial contributions to *The Florida Green* and *Golfdom* magazines. Jackson also has been an active and longtime member of GCSAA's Publications Committee. Additionally, he currently serves on GCSAA's Government Relations Committee, and in the past, he has been a member of GCSAA's Conference and Show Committee and the former Communications Focus Group.



Dudley and Marlene.



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Fear and Loathing on the House-Hunting Trail



The Ups and Downs of Moving

There comes a time (or several times) in a person's life when, due to any number of circumstances, he must sell his house. With luck, the circumstances behind selling one's house are good—finding a bigger and better house, moving into a better neighborhood, etc.—as opposed to bad (foreclosure, unanticipated relocation, hauntings, etc.). This is an account of the trials and tribulations I and my family experienced recently while making the move from one house to another. Hopefully, our experience can shed some light on this very stressful time and offer you—the future home buyer and/or seller—some advice on how to make the process proceed as seamlessly as possible.

If you are actively (or even passively, as was our case) shopping for a new house, be prepared to make the big commitment on a moment's notice.

I will preface this by saying that our circumstances for selling were good—we found the exact house we were looking for in the exact location we were hoping for (although I still to this day suspect our old house was indeed haunted). An added bonus was gaining 1,000 additional square feet of wonderful space for kids to go play and leave daddy and mommy in peace for a while. That being said, I'll offer my first of many tidbits of advice: **If you are actively (or even passively, as was our case) shopping for a new house, be prepared to make the big commitment on a moment's notice.** In other words, have your homework done—find out what type of financing you will need in the price range you are looking into, how much you're qualified to borrow, what needs to be done to your existing home to get it on the market, what you can expect to sell it for, the costs associated with moving and a thousand other details. Having this information before looking at houses will be a huge help if you have to make a split-second decision.

To obtain this information, you can do one of two things: Either do it all yourself (if you are a masochist), or go meet your three new best friends—your lawyer, your mortgage broker and your realtor. Being a lazy creature, I chose the latter, and all three received Christmas cards from the Gurke family for their invaluable assistance in making everything work out. In our particular instance, we were passively looking for a new house. Although it took two years to find it, once we did it took less than 24 hours to place an offer on it.

(continued on page 26)

This is why that homework thing is important—if you find THE house, you may have to act quickly. The day we found THE house, another offer was written, and the owners were considering accepting it. Through numerous phone calls and e-mails, we were able to make an offer that was accepted a mere 22 hours after first spotting the “For Sale” sign in the yard. So yippee—we have a new house! This would be the time to rewrite your employee job descriptions to include helping you move.

Now comes the fun part—selling the old house in as short a time frame as possible. This was a HUGE necessity for us, as the owners of our new house wanted a very quick closing, meaning we would be carrying two mortgages until the old house was unloaded. This leads us to tip #2: **Even if you are only passively looking for new digs, start fixing up your existing house early.** Best friend realtor guy was instrumental in getting us off our rears and putting scrapers and paint brushes in our hands. The key areas to focus on are the front entry and overall exterior appearance of the house, the kitchen and the bathrooms. And for some silly reason, buzzwords like “hardwood floors” and “crown molding” and “exquisitely manicured” tend to attract potential buyers to your now-a-financial-burden second home. Peeling paint is bad. Electric garage doors are good. Worn, dirty carpet is bad. New roof is VERY good. “Fixer-upper” is bad. “Recently remodeled” is good. Romex is bad. Conduit is good. To obtain maximum value for your house, all of these items should

be addressed before that “For Sale” sign gets stuck in your lawn.

The unfortunate downside to doing all this fixing up is that you are doing it for someone else to enjoy, and your house is finally nice enough for you to stay in at the exact same time that you have to leave it. The upside is that all the valuable skills you learn from fixing up the old place will come in very handy in the new place. Of course, the downside to THAT is that you’ll be so sick and tired of painting, plumbing, patching and pretty-ifying the old house that you won’t want to do it all over again in the new one. But then there’s that other upside—you’ll do it anyhow to keep your already-strained marriage from completely collapsing. Besides, many of these projects involve “guy time” in the garage (or wherever your work area was relegated in the move), which can be nice. All things considered, it is in your best interest to do as much as you can to make your house look like someone else’s home. Once this is accomplished, the fun begins: Putting it on the market.

If you thought the hard work was done by this point, you were mistaken. Now is the time when, regardless of how many marauding hellions, slobbering infants and incontinent dogs you have, your house must ALWAYS be in perfect “having the President over for dinner” shape. This is no small task—every morning before heading off to work, dishes must be done and stowed, floors vacuumed and swept, garbage taken out, toys put in their places (under beds, in crawl spaces, on closet floors, etc.), bad smells Lysoled, laundry put away and undies hidden, and any evidence of pets hidden (including yard evidence, if you know what I’m talking about). If you are fortunate as I was, you live very close to work and can dash home at a moment’s notice to do “the list”—the final touches before a showing (and there can be a LOT of showings, let me tell you). These touches include, but are not limited to, turning on the appropriate lights that make the house look better (the ones that don’t blink, dim or flicker); putting the batteries back in the

smoke detectors; flushing the dookie one of the kids left in the toilet; and smooshing the spider in the top corner of the dining room. Oh, yes, and this is also the time to begin looking for three-hour diversions for you and your family on weekends (almost exclusively during Bears games), as weekends now become “open house” days. We discovered most of the cultural attractions Aurora has to offer while strangers walked through our house and looked in our closets.

And if that isn’t enough “food” piled on your plate, it is also time to begin the moving thing. All superfluous household items that have no real place—the clutter—need to be removed. Best friend realtor guy says it’s to make the house look bigger and “show better.” We think it’s his way of saying, “Get rid of that ugly couch you found at the end of your neighbor’s driveway on garbage day.” Everything but the absolute essentials must be boxed, labeled (you WERE amassing boxes from the start of this, right?) and stored out of sight. Your labor situation must be finalized, either by calling a moving company (BIG bucks) or picking a weekend, calling all friends with pick-up trucks and having cash for pizza and beer. Side note: On moving day, get the fragile and bulky items moved before popping that first cold one—your friends, while invaluable during this ordeal, do not care if your leather couch gets a little trashed squeezing it through the door. The people we bought our new house from failed to take this crucial step (or their friends failed to show up), forcing them to rent their house back from us for a week while they moved (a request we were more than happy to oblige).

All this work and turmoil do eventually pay off when that magical call comes from your realtor saying, “We have an offer.” Now a new phase begins in the arduous process. This is when your best friend mortgage guy and your best friend lawyer guy enter the picture. Forms must be faxed. Inspections must be made. More forms must be faxed. More inspections must be made. Once it is clear that no third parties, termites, varmints, molds, mildews, poisonous gases or

*Even if you
are only passively
looking for new
digs, start
fixing up your
existing house
early.*

even bacteria live in your house or its water supply; and once it is clear that the offer made, countered, counter-counter, refused, restructured, reneged upon, reviewed and reconsidered is acceptable to you, it is time to set a closing date. Now stuff is getting downright serious. This is the date on which your financial burden will be removed. The date when you will sign a great many documents that your best friend lawyer guy will “explain in a nutshell” while you frantically sign, initial and date them (why these forms can’t be written in “nutshell” language instead of legal Swahili is beyond me). The date when your life becomes normal again. Right.

I’ll offer this next tip and explain afterward: **Do not count your nest eggs before they hatch.** Always be prepared for the worst (in our case, the new buyers’ financing falling through). There are several red flags to look for when considering an offer from a particular buyer. First, if after walking through the house and grounds they comment on how the front yard might be too small for mama’s trailer, put up one red flag. If upon seeing the bathrooms they marvel at the prospect of indoor plumbing, put up another red flag. If they begin talking amongst themselves about calling Uncle Jodie to cosign, or going to “the guvmint fer a loan,” put up yet another flag. These are the types of things that will keep you an owner of two houses. In our case, there were three extensions to the original closing date (three more red flags) in an effort to find SOMEONE out there who would lend the new buyers money. You see, this brings up a very essential point: Just because someone is “preapproved” for a loan, this does not in any way indicate that they “qualify” for that loan. I think all it means is that they have the right to ask a bank for a loan. We found this out the hard way. Best friend mortgage broker guy informed us that preapproval means that the lending institution looks at what they earn versus what they spend to determine whether they can afford it. Nothing more. Once they apply for financing is when the real dirt is dug up and the dreaded credit check is performed. That report usually arrives the day before closing, and when it’s bad,

closing gets postponed while “other financing options are explored.” After the third postponement, it’s time to start all over again with the cleaning, the walk-throughs, the open houses, the pooper scooper patrols and the constant phone calls. In our case, we had already moved to the new house, leaving the old UNSOLD house empty and not very inviting. We also were doing all this just before Christmas when not many people decide it’s a good idea to move. It was nice bumping into you, Normal Life—hope to see you again REAL soon.

Christmas. Two gas bills. Two electric bills. Two mortgages, and two kids expecting costly battery-operated gizmos and gadgets from the North Pole. I considered taking what spare change I had to the track and betting it all on Santa’s Little Helper. In the end, though, a buyer was found. Someone who had seen the house while it still had furniture in it, had liked it, but were too late to make an offer before the first couple had been accepted (oops). This buyer was solid! Closing was a mere afterthought, what with their good credit rating, their desire to move in quickly and the assurances from all parties involved that it was “a go.” With all this going for us, we still had that sinking feeling that our string of incredibly bad luck would intercede once again, forcing us back into the abyss of dual home ownership. In the final week before closing, the ring of the phone was, to us, a disaster siren. If caller ID said “Lawyer Guy,” pants were soiled. But once this week of hell was over (actually week-and-a-half—can you believe the guy who processes all the documents for the buyers’ mortgage company had the nerve to up and die on us?), we arrived at the best day of our lives—closing day. After abusing my carpal-tunnel-affected writing hand, we walked out of it with a big fat check and 17 fewer keys in our pockets. We went over to the old house and dug up the St. Joseph statuette to proudly display in the new home (in the process we inadvertently interrupted the new owners’ “breaking in the new house” celebration). We put in the mailbox the pile of bills awaiting sufficient funds to be sent. We got our normal life back and all the planets were once again aligned.

There are several red flags to look for when considering an offer from a particular buyer. First, if after walking through the house and grounds they comment on how the front yard might be too small for mama’s trailer, put up one red flag. If upon seeing the bathrooms they marvel at the prospect of indoor plumbing, put up another red flag. If they begin talking amongst themselves about calling Uncle Jodie to cosign, or going to “the guvmint fer a loan,” put up yet another flag.

What, besides what I’ve already imparted, did we learn from this experience? How did it make us better? First, we now know that our marriage is impervious to outside influences bidding for a chance at our ruination. Second, we can fix anything—we are plumbers, electricians, paperers, painters, deck-builders, carpet-layers and landscapers now. Third and finally, we know that, unless forced to, we will never EVER EVER move again.



Needless to say, the stretching of the dollar is something at which we have become very adept. If we are expected to accumulate a sound financial reserve fund, finding alternative revenue sources is something we will have to become adept at doing as well. There certainly are areas in the budget that can be addressed. No longer can we perceive a break-even proposition as a good thing. Here again, what we can achieve without hindering member services will be of the utmost importance.

In the meantime, it is February and time to be thinking of the GCSAA conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Once again, the MAGCS will be hosting a Hospitality Suite for our membership. And once again, we can thank the generosity of our commercial members for making this gala event a reality. This year, the spacious setting for the festivities will be located in the Marriott Marquis (GCSAA Headquarters Hotel) for two nights: Wednesday, February 12 and Thursday, February 13, from 6 to 10 p.m. The MAGCS will have much

to celebrate with our very own Bob Maibusch campaigning for GCSAA secretary/treasurer and Dudley Smith's selection as one of this year's GCSAA Distinguished Service Award recipients. So come join us, rally with Bob and his campaign, and congratulate Dudley for all his years of service to upgrading our profession. Hope to see you all there!





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- The most powerful channel of communication: Prayer.
- The most contagious spirit: Enthusiasm.
- The worst thing to be without: Hope.



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

The MAGCS Board of Directors met at Bartlett Hills Golf Course on January 7, 2003. The following are highlights from that meeting. Full meeting minutes, once approved, appear on the MAGCS Web site (www.magcs.org).

- Kevin DeRoo received a letter from Brian Bossert concerning the merits of appointing an assistant superintendent to the MAGCS BOD. It was noted that one out of seven MAGCS members are assistants. A motion was made by Luke Strojny and seconded by Scott Speiden to have President DeRoo appoint an assistant superintendent to a two-year nonvoting position on the MAGCS Board. The motion passed. The BOD is currently constructing a description for this appointment.
- Cathy Miles Ralston gave a detailed revenue and expense report for *On Course* magazine, focusing on year-end numbers for 2002. Cathy also discussed several ideas to hold expenses in check for the upcoming year and noted that the magazine would always welcome more advertisers.
- Tim Anderson reported that the hospitality suite is booked for 6 to 10 p.m., February 12-13, at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. All details were being worked out.
- Kevin DeRoo reported that we are very close to hiring a full-time executive secretary with an office at the Midwest Golf House in Lemont. Duties and expenses will be shared by the MAGCS (three-fifths) and the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (two-fifths).
- Gary Hearn presented the following new members:

Tom Clesen	Class E
Clesen Wholesale	
Kasey Vandenberg	Class C
Prairie Landing G.C.	
Trent Bradford	Class E
Chicagoland Turf	
Brandon Burns	Class C
Edgewood Valley G.C.	
Sylvia Lima	Class E
TPEC	
- Tony Kalina motioned and Gary Hearn seconded approval of the proposed 2003 budget, which has an overall 2% increase over 2002. The motion passed.



2003 Scholarship Season Begins Soon

GCSAA ended the 2002 year with the awarding of the Watson Award in November. Twenty thousand dollars was awarded to four graduate students who plan careers either in research or teaching. This capped a very successful year for the scholarship program. The Scholars Program awarded \$42,500 to 28 turfgrass students; the Legacy Program awarded \$30,000 to 20 students who are sons or daughters of golf course superintendents; the Valderrama winner received a check for \$10,000; the Scotts Award Program awarded \$7,500; and the essay contest awarded \$4,500.

The 2003 season begins in March. The programs and their deadlines follow:

- The Scotts Company Scholars Program – March 1
- Essay Contest – March 31
- Legacy Award – April 15
- GCSAA Scholars Program – June 1
- Valderrama Award – Biannual program, will not be awarded again until 2004
- GCSAA Watson Fellowship – October 1

The GCSAA scholarship program is administered by The GCSAA Foundation. For more information

on the individual programs, please contact Pam Smith, scholarship manager, at 800-472-7878, ext. 678, or via e-mail at psmith@gcsaa.org or go to: <http://www.gcsaa.org/career/pursuing/scholarships/scholars.asp>



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