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### FRONT COVER

Encore, encore! On Saturday, November 13, John Gurke, CGCS and Aurora Country Club—seen here from the air—once again extend their hospitality for the MAGCS Fall Dinner Dance. (Photo by Golf Shots Unlimited, Inc., Castle Rock, Colorado, 303-814-3586)

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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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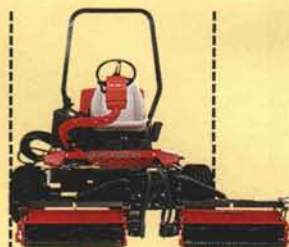
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## ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Fred Behnke, CGCS Mount Prospect Golf Club

# Golfers Who Get It— Priceless

*This is absolutely my favorite time of the year. The fast-approaching holiday season is heralded by the merry sounds of irrigation systems being winterized, the happy gurgle of lakes being drained and the joyous tap-tap-tap of elves changing bedknives. It's still too early to worry too much about next year, maybe some budget work, maybe a little catch-up on some smoldering projects, but by and large the big stuff is done. The course is aerified, the leaves are cleaned up, the seasonal staff is gone for the winter, a few diehard golfers still brave the elements, but it's not uncommon to get out on the course and not see a living soul.*

Given time to think is a wonderful gift. Urgency breeds instinctive responses that may or may not be the most appropriate under the circumstances. I often find myself redoing work that was done in a hurry, angry with myself that I let it happen again. Before you get too caught up in what's coming up, use this time to look back on last year. Evaluate the hits, honestly critique the misses and get a head start on the holiday season by expressing some gratitude to the elves that help you make the magic.

One of our often-overlooked cadres of support is "golfers who get it."

Just who are "golfers who get it?"

Perhaps this can be best explained by examining who they aren't: the larger segment of the species—Players Understanding Diddley (PUDs):

- A regular golfer at my place, an educated professional, walked up to me and commented on the condition of the fairways, saying, "The fairways are excellent, I see you finally raised the height of cut like I suggested last year."

"Well Doc," I replied, "first of all you're right, the fairways are in good condition, but it's due, in large part, to the weather and several changes we've made to our cultural program . . ."

"No it's not, you raised the height of cut!"

"Excuse me, Doc, what about the fairways do you like better than before?"

"My ball sits up real nice. I'm able to strike more of the ball and spin it." (This guy is a player, maybe a 7 or 8 handicap.)

"Good, that's what I was hoping would happen when I dropped the height one-eighth of an inch so the grass blades stay upright. I was worried that by doing so I might cause more stress with the amount of play we . . ."

"You lowered the height of cut?"

"Yes, among other things, as I was saying . . ."

"No you didn't!"

"Excuse me?"

"No you didn't, you raised the cut—do you think I'm an idiot?"

(No, now I know you are.)

As I said, a PUD.

- We're closed on Mondays until 9:00 a.m. and play starts on the first tee only, so we can get some work done on the course. I fought tooth and nail for this time and guard it jealously. You public supers know how important that kind of window is. One Monday we're running around spraying, watering, topdressing, I don't remember exactly what, but I look up and there's a group on the third tee and it's 9:03 a.m.; making matters worse, they're a fivesome of employees, starters and rangers, each with his own riding cart!

(continued on page 4)

*"Golfers who get it"  
are the unsung  
heroes that keep us  
from going postal  
on the "great  
unwashed."*



I flip out and ride up to them, guns blazing!

"What the heck are you guys doing out here. The course is closed until 9:00 and you know it!"

"Jeeze, Fred, what are you so upset about. We waited until 9:00 and decided to start on number three because the first tee was so backed up. Is that a problem?"

Again, PUDs.

• My course has a Golf Advisory Committee (acronym; GAcK); it's our equivalent of a Greens Committee. Anyway, one of the members called me out on our watering practices.

"Why are the greens so dry when I play? My shots don't hold." (Handicap 26, this guy couldn't spin the ball if he used a Cuisinart.) "I know you have an irrigation system, don't you use it?"

(Oh boy.) "Yes we irrigate the greens, but only as needed to provide about one inch of water per week. So, you see, it depends on precipitation, evaporation, wind and temperature. Factor all of these variables together and we program the system to . . ."

"So you don't water every night!"

"No, as I was saying . . ."

"Well, you should!"

Classic PUD.

I love PUD stories; they are fun to share with other supers. PUDs are usually pretty harmless, because they are kept in check by their fellow "golfers who get it." PUDs can be dangerous if they find their way into a position of authority at your course. Be patient and communicate and keep a good supply of "golfers who get it," hopefully ones that carry low handicaps; they're revered by PUDs, who think a good player knows everything about the game.

PUDs are inevitable; they are the counterpoint that make you really appreciate "golfers who get it."

• You've spent 13 hours aerifying greens to finish the job in one day, the guys are whipped, the machinery is smoking. While you're wiping the sweat out of your eyes a golfer strides up and, lo and behold, compliments you on the greens and thanks you for your staff's efforts.


• It's ladies' league day and one of the fairway mowers dinged a bed-knife so they're behind. One of the

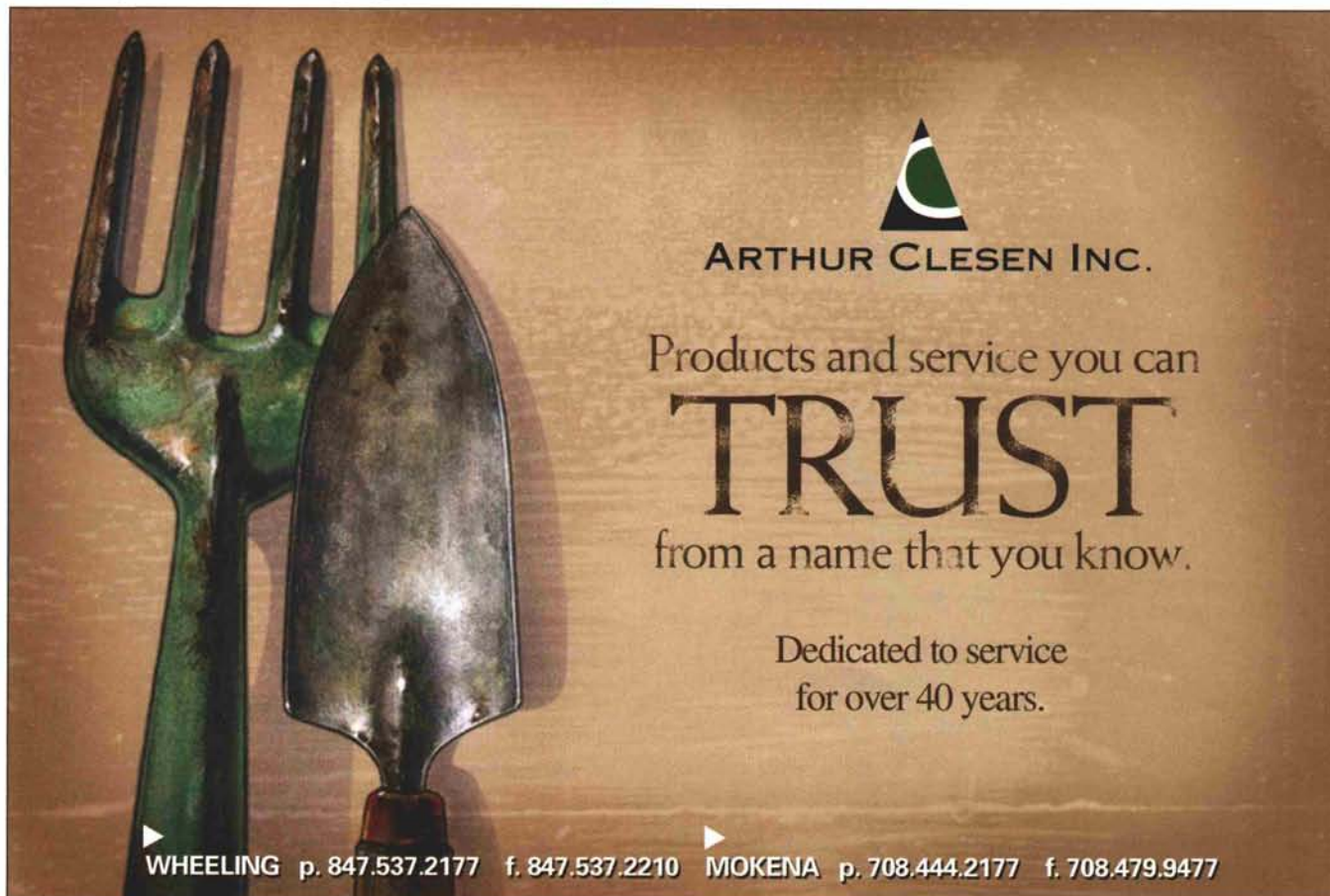
players marches up to you and proceeds to rave on about how you always schedule maintenance during their times and interfere with their enjoyment of the game. Her playing partner steps in to say, "Well Gladys, that's not true, I've noticed they usually have two mowers out here to keep ahead of us. I only see one today, there must be some sort of problem with the other one. Is that right Fred?"


• A player agrees to go off with some beginners, keeps them on pace and shows them how to repair ball marks, replace divots and rake the bunkers.

• A regular comes up to you and quietly informs you that the divot mix box is empty on seven tee.

• A player accidentally runs over a cart sign and actually stops, gets out of the cart and replaces it.

"Golfers who get it" are the unsung heroes that keep us from going postal on the "great unwashed." We all have PUD stories; let's remember the "golfers who get it" when we give thanks on November 25th. 



  
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# My Great Idea

*To take something . . . and try to make it better. It is a premise to which most of us try to adhere constantly. We do this daily on the golf courses that employ us. Seven years ago, it was one of the reasons I became involved with the inner workings of the MAGCS. I thought that if I could come up with one really great idea, I could change the world, or at least a small fragment thereof known as the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents.*

*The MAGCS Board is about a small group of people willing to represent a larger group of people; it's about making decisions based on a thorough investigation of all pertinent information to form a conclusion that favors the majority.*

Now, as my responsibilities on the Board are waning and I am closing in on that great past presidents' pasture in the sky, it gives me time to reflect and realize how young, gullible and stupid I really was (I said **was**). Looking back, I am ashamed to confess that in the seven years I have served, I did not come up with one really great idea to make MAGCS better. Looking back over my years served on the Board, I can admit to only participating in many major decisions that would affect the operations today. To highlight some of the decisions that were made by the different Boards I served on in seven years: we formed an MAGCS Web site, contracted Cathy M. Ralston as editor of *On Course* and turned *On Course* into a full four-color magazine, drove our membership numbers to the 700 mark, put together hospitality rooms that cannot be matched by any other GCSAA chapter, made donations to affiliated organizations approaching the \$30,000 range, formed the Class C Advisory Committee, centralized our operations at Midwest Golf House and teamed up with the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation in forming the executive director position, then contracted our very own Luke Cella to fill that position.

To take primary credit or blame for any of the changes to the MAGCS over the years of my tenure would be a grave injustice to those who have served alongside me. The truth of the matter that I can humbly admit is that MAGCS probably would have evolved without me. Our job as a Board is not to merely stay the course and navigate the ship through the rough seas. It is about exploring and discovering new ways to solve old/new problems. What I have learned over these years as a director is that this is not about individuals, it is not about one person with an idea making a difference. The MAGCS Board is about a small group of people willing to represent a larger group of people; it's about making decisions based on a thorough investigation of all pertinent information to form a conclusion that favors the majority. It is many people with many ideas, all with a common goal in mind, trying to make things better.

In closing, I would like to say only this: the time commitment of serving on the MAGCS Board of Directors these past seven years pales in comparison to the feeling I have of honor, satisfaction and pride in the Association that chose me to do so. I owe many lifelong friendships to serving MAGCS. I have the deepest respect and fondest admiration for all those who volunteer their time to try to make things better. My only hope is they all receive the support and overwhelming fulfillment I have.

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# Safeguarding Against Vandalism



*It would never be appropriate to compare golf course vandalism to terrorism. However, when we discover car tire ruts on our greens; flagpoles, benches or ball-washers swimming in our ponds; or graffiti of any kind on buildings, how exactly do we feel?*

*Here are some strategies we can implement to prevent vandalism at our golf courses.*

On a recent Tuesday morning, as I drove my golf course I came upon my 8th green, which sits high atop a hill and in plain view of homes bordering the course. During the night this green had gasoline poured on it, the golf cup hole filled with fuel and the entire works set on fire! No matter how many times in our careers this happens, we still have the same feelings of internal rage, sadness, frustration and a whole list of other unprintable emotions.

This leads to the question of how we can prevent such thoughtless acts from happening. I have compiled a list of many simple and not-so-simple potential deterrents so you may leave your facility at the end of the day without vandalism being among your worries.

## **Lighting**

Have your shop facility well-lit all the way around. Where possible, use motion-detector lights. Most of the newer irrigation system satellites have switch programs that can turn off or on just like an irrigation sprinkler station. Take advantage of these options available to you.

## **Fencing**

Is the entire perimeter of your golf course fenced in? If it is not and if it is possible to do so, by all means fence it in. Some villages may have ordinances restricting the type of fence you install. An electronic gate is advised for in front of the main entrance. On the outside frame of shop windows, you can install galvanized wire-mesh window coverings. Not only will they deter vandals, but they also deflect golf balls that might otherwise shatter glass.

## **Video Cameras**

Strategically mounted video cameras can do wonders to deter vandals. Linked to a recorder inside, they will monitor and record all activity and provide timed and dated material for future reference if needed. You might even

*(continued on page 9)*



## DO YOU EVER HAVE TO GROW GRASS IN A HURRY?

- ‡ Is it tough to keep enough grass on your practice tee?
- ‡ A week after a repair do your divots look like grass or sand?
- ‡ How do your fairways hold up under heavy use?
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use dummy cameras plugged into nothing; if the individuals wishing to do harm to your facility see them, they will often change their minds about destruction.

## Security Systems

My shop has a security system that monitors in many ways. It has contact points on all doors and windows so if one is broken, the alarm immediately goes off and sends a loud message that states, "Step away, you have violated security, the police are on their way." I also have voice-activated microphones that are directly linked to the security monitoring center; they record all voice activity. Most importantly, the signals for my security system are wireless, so phone lines being cut will not disrupt security service.

## Dogs

There is nothing as simple and sometimes more effective than a loud barking dog. If you have a dog at your shop that chases geese during the day and is a light sleeper at night, what a great combination!

These are just a few potential deterrents; I'm sure there are more. If just one method or one trick makes the difference between vandalism, theft or any sort of wrongdoing, it's worth pursuing. Whatever preventative maintenance measures are available to you, investigate them and implement their use. Hopefully your plan will better safeguard you against vandalism and that gut-wrenching feeling we get when it occurs.



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