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AUGUST 2006

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FRONT COVER

The green complex on the number 5, par 5 at McHenry Country Club.
(photo credit: Luke Cella)

ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

3 Assistant Superintendent Plight

Gary Hearn

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

5 Encouragement and Promotion

John Ekstrom

7 MIDWEST BREEZES

Brad Anderson

SUPER -N- SITE

9 Bill Humphres -N- McHenry Country Club

Justin Wheeler

FEATURE ARTICLE

13 Native Ecological Restoration at Rich Harvest Farms

Scott Resetch and Jeffre VerCautren

FEATURE ARTICLE

17 Emerald Ash Borer - The Battle Plan

Luke Cella

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING WITH

23 Gearing Up For Aeration

Ted Soenksen

26 THE BULL SHEET

John Gurke

33 AWARDS

39 MIDWEST EDUCATION RECAP

Brad Anderson

40 MIDWEST PERSONALITIES

41 MAGCS IN MOTION

Luke Cella

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.

All editorial and advertisement inquiries should be directed to Luke Cella, Publisher, *On Course*, 11855 Archer Avenue, Lemont, IL, 60439. (630) 243-7900 or visit www.magcs.org for rates and requirements. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of the officers or members.



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Assistant Superintendent Plight

The dog days are upon us and soon school bells will be ringing signaling the end of another summer vacation. I hope everybody had an excellent summer. Hopefully this season wasn't a back-breaker like the last for the majority of superintendents in our area.

I congratulate Ken Lapp and Cog Hill Golf Club for an excellent venue and great conditioning of the course. Next year the format will change and the tournament will be held in September. Ken, you and your crew have done an excellent job providing outstanding entertainment at your facility – thank you. This month, the PGA Championship will be held at Medinah CC beginning on the 14th. Hopefully you will get a chance to stop by and take a needed break and enjoy the fruits of Tom Lively, CGCS and staff. Good luck Tom and Medinah CC, we all look forward to another fantastic event.

One competition that was completed in May is the Bird Watching Open. Once again Olympia Fields Country Club was #1 for the Best of the Mississippi and Great Lakes Flyway with seventy-four different species identified. Olympia Fields was followed closely by Village Links of Glen Ellyn with sixty-seven species identified. There were a total of eight courses in our region that participated on that rainy day and I want to say thank you for your involvement:

*Though it may
seem very difficult
to land a
superintendent job,
it occurs.*

CLUB/COURSE	SPECIES IDENTIFIED
Olympia Fields Country Club	(74)
Village Links of Glen Ellyn	(67)
Springbrook Golf Course	(59)
Prestwick Country Club	(58)
Itasca Country Club	(42)
Bryn Mawr Country Club	(31)
Mt. Prospect Golf Course	(28)
Salt Creek Golf Club	(23)

On to Our Assistants

All Regular Members have been down the professional career road looking for the first superintendent position. Remember hoping and wishing that a certain golf course would offer you the job? You wanted nothing more than to apply your education and your experiences to improve the golf course and make it your own. This process still occurs every time there is a vacancy for a golf course superintendent position. Each person in the application process goes through the thought process of taking the helm, initiating the changes they would make, and thinking of the sacrifices that would have to be given. It is a tough profession and even tougher for assistant superintendents to become recognized for their dedication, devotion and education. Though it may seem very difficult to land a superintendent job, it occurs. Each time a position becomes available, there is a large number of qualified applicants in the pool

(continued on page 4)

comprised of veteran superintendents and willing assistants. It is always difficult to say who will get called for an interview and ultimately the job and I wish you all the best of luck and encourage you to persevere.

I have noticed in recent years a number of assistant superintendents that are moving laterally, changing career tracks within the profession and leaving the industry altogether. This movement seems to be on the rise. My concerns, these are my personal views, are that some of these assistants set themselves up to fail because of their standards for their dream job have been set too high. There is no doubt that influence is strong from educators, mentors and our society in general, to always have the best of everything. However, reality does not always agree with these imposed viewpoints. Any profession can be viewed as a pyramid with the best at the top. Our industry can only support so many golf courses and premiere positions at the top of the pyramid. Needles to say, there are

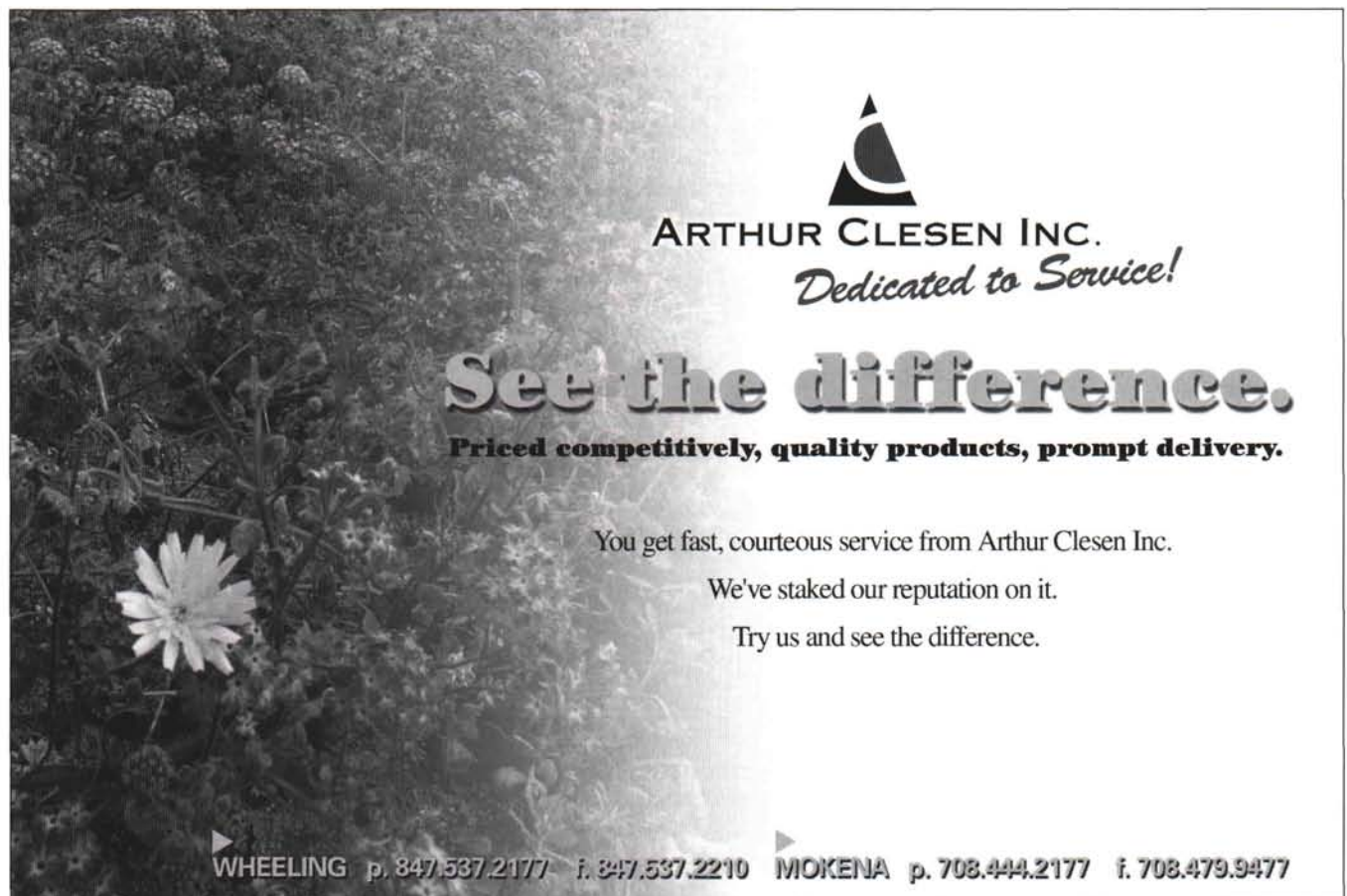
often many positions that are overlooked because they do not always meet the criteria of today's applicant. I can only encourage you to take a look at your goals and realize limitations built in to the system. Take a look at your priorities in life, including your family, friends and career. Ask yourself, where do you want to be in twenty years?


It is a tough road for the Assistant Superintendent. The golf industry has changed since the 90's, fewer courses are being built and opened which translates to fewer positions. There are more specialty positions such as irrigation and spray technicians as the profession gets more and more technical, however there are still only so many superintendent jobs. I know when I was working my way up from grounds staff to superintendent I tried to involve myself with every aspect within the maintenance operation. I urge you to do the same. Learn what a good equipment technician does, spend some time with them (get your hands dirty), create your own spray

program, design a landscape and try your hand at course layout. Look at your career as a learning experience. I know most of you love what you do and this is the most important concern that will lead you to success.



*My concerns...
are that some
of these assistants
set themselves up
to fail because
of their standards
for their dream
job have been
set too high.*




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Encouragement and Promotion

One writer for the golf publication, Links stated, "Chicago has the best golf in the country... for the number of courses at such a good price, it is by far the best." I cannot add my own comments to that because I am somewhat biased. Nonetheless, I do agree.

No other local chapter association has a committee that is solely comprised of assistant superintendents and represented at the board level.

Many factors have gone into making the Chicagoland golf so great. The one factor that pertains to superintendents is membership in the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. Our group's mission is to "provide affordable and environmentally sound golf course conditioning that results in the highest quality and playability possible." Having been a part of this board for the better part of seven months, I can say that everyone involved has worked tirelessly to continually provide many tools and opportunities for all of the members.

This area has many great golf courses, which creates much competition. The same is said for assistant superintendents aspiring to achieve the next level. With a finite amount of golf courses and many capable and skilled individuals to maintain them, becoming a golf course superintendent is not an easy task.

The Class C Advisory Committee, which was formed back in 2003, strives to provide educational growth and promote personal/professional development toward becoming a golf course superintendent. Erwin McKone and Chad Kempf, the first two Class C Advisors respectively, began leading this committee unlike any other in the entire Nation. No other local chapter association has a committee that is solely comprised of assistant superintendents and represented at the board level. Then President, Kevin DeRoo, was paramount in the beginning of our committee, and I thank him along with Erwin and Chad for their hard work and vision.

The focal event each year for the Class C group has become the Annual Assistant Winter Workshop. The first two years' topics pertained to career development. Our keynote speakers for those were Mr. Jim McLaughlin and Mr. Pat Jones, respectively. Each provided information and insights on our industry and speaking about career tracks toward a superintendent position. Last year we changed the theme to the weather. Mr. Phil Schwarz, Meteorologist for ABC 7 - Chicago and Mr. Paul Vermeulen of the USGA spoke of the summer of 2005. We look forward to many more great Assistant Workshops.

New for this year, is the addition of the publication, *Assistants Update*. The "Update" is a means of communication for information, dates, and features for assistants and all members alike. It is accessed by going to the MAGCS website at magcs.org via the assistants link. I highly encourage everyone to check it out.

The assistant shoptalks have been expanded to five different locations this year. The first shoptalk followed the Winter Workshop in January, and the second shoptalk was hosted on the west side at Aurora CC back in March. Broken Arrow GC in Lockport was the Southside club who hosted in May. Our fourth get-together was on July 20 at Dave and Busters, and finally we will be up north on October 5 at Inverness CC in Palatine. We hope to see you there.

With the information and opportunities available, the MAGCS aids assistants in our aspiring careers. The vision and views of the superintendents on the MAGCS Board make the efforts of the Class C group possible. Thanks to all superintendents who encourage their assistants to attend and be involved in the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents.





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Midwest Breezes



Naperville Country Club

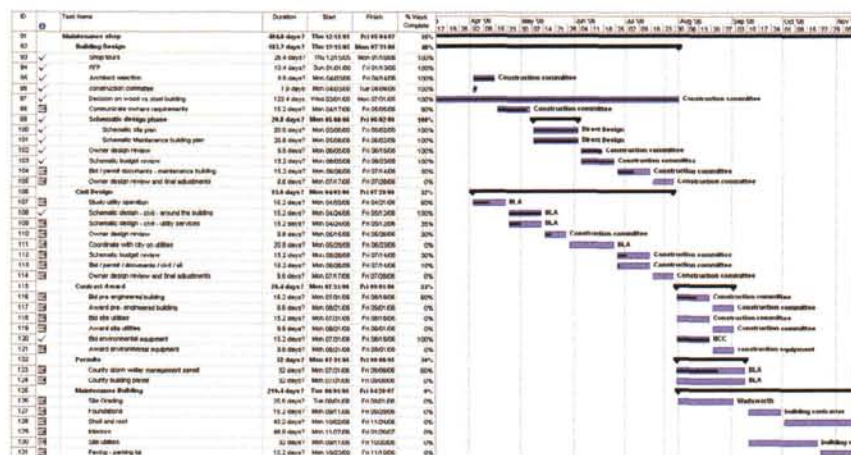
On July 10, the golf course at Naperville Country Club was closed for remodeling. Several holes are being completely re-routed, along with significant changes to virtually every hole on the golf course. Tim Anderson, CGCS is also overseeing construction of a new maintenance shop, pump station and halfway house. Furthermore a new irrigation system is being installed, new ponds are

separate project categories each with their own time line. Each project has sub-items with start dates, deadlines, and milestones plus the names of all involved parties, and their various responsibilities. Each task can be tracked by date, by responsible party, by cost and other factors to help Tim manage the project as a whole.

All of this information is printed out onto 28 standard sized papers, and taped together into a document called a Gant chart. The chart allows Tim and the committees of the club to visually track where they are in their progress. There are check-offs for each phase of every project, and the Gant chart illustrates the progress of each line item with a bar graph, showing where the progress should be on each day, against actual progress.

Tim feels that the Gant chart has helped everyone to take ownership of their individual tasks and roles. And most importantly, it has helped to keep things on schedule.

Brad Anderson, CGCS



Microsoft (MS) Project as it appears on the computer.

being dug, a deep well is being drilled and lastly the clubhouse parking lot will be remodeled. All of this work is happening in a short period of time, with Tim orchestrating the activities of dozens and dozens of suppliers, contractors, governing agencies, and committee people.

With a project of this scope and magnitude, Tim was looking for a tool to help him keep everything organized. At Luke Cella's recommendation Tim purchased the computer program Microsoft (MS) Project. MS Project is a program designed specifically for managing projects, resources and schedules in one easy to use format. The use of MS Project has enabled Tim to put every detail of each project into one interrelated document.

Through the simple use of timelines, MS Project keeps track of schedules, resources, budgets, estimates, task assignments, and shows how delays of small tasks affect the project as a whole. Tim custom designed eleven



The Project printed out onto 28 standard sized papers, and taped together into a document called a Gant chart.

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Bill Humphres -N-



The Humphres, Bill and his wife Shoko with daughter Amber.



*McHenry
Country Club*

In 1922 a fine country club was established with nine holes that overlooked the Fox River in McHenry, IL. Construction on the second nine holes began in 1925 and in 1926, a regulation 18-hole facility was presented to the membership for their enjoyment and leisure. The course was played in original form until 1953 when major renovations brought the lengthening of several holes, numerous tree plantings, bunker renovations and improved greens. The club has since remained virtually unchanged except for aesthetic improvements around tee and green complexes.



The clubhouse at McHenry CC.

The man behind the scenes that maintains and dedicates hard work to this beautiful and scenic layout is Bill Humphres. Bill came to McHenry Country Club about eleven years ago as the equipment technician. During his tenure, he also worked outside with the grounds crew and discovered he had a real knack for both turf and machinery. Quickly, he realized he enjoyed working outside as well as inside. While still working at McHenry Country Club Bill earned a degree in turf management from Rutgers. Shortly after completing his studies he became ideal candidate to take over the helm as superintendent. Bill has been in charge at McHenry Country Club for the past four years. He is continuing in the footsteps of his mentor, Bob Lively.

While he is not busy working, Bill likes to go for rides on his 2005 Harley Davidson Road King Classic. However, he spends most of his free time with his family. His wife, Shoko, and daughter, Amber, are the receivers of much fond attention and precious time. Amber keeps Bill and his wife busy with the life of a seven year-old daughter that is involved with gymnastics and swim meets. Bill has been on many trips to Japan and enjoys all aspects of the country including the food stating that sushi is probably his favorite type of food.

When asked for some fun facts and interesting information about the golf course, Bill advised for all of us playing the golf course this August a few pointers:

(continued on page 10)

First, beware of the dogleg in the second fairway. There is a large oak tree at the corner that practically plays in the middle of the fairway. The tree can make second shots very difficult. Good luck to anyone that is misfortunate enough to be directly behind it.

Second, the thirteenth green is a fun optical illusion. Putts look uphill but they are actually downhill. So, putting from the front of the green will actually be downhill even though the large hill behind the green makes you think otherwise. This has been verified by Bill and his crew with a transit.

Finally a small but important piece of golf history comes out of McHenry, IL. McHenry Country Club has a link to one of the most important pioneers in today's modern game of golf. Vale Adams was the golf pro at McHenry C.C. from 1962 to 1981 and continues as a member of the course today. His son, Gary V. Adams was the innovator of the modern metal wood, founding Taylor Made Golf, which was originally located in McHenry. Gary Adams went on to found two more companies featuring metal woods-Founders Club and McHenry Metals. The walking bridge on the signature 8th hole is dedicated to the memory of Gary



The oak tree on the dogleg #2 at McHenry as seen from the back of the green.

Adams. Stop and take a picture if you get a chance to commemorate the improvement in your golf bag over the historic persimmon wood club heads.

I got a real sense while talking with Bill that the membership of McHenry Country Club is a very tight-knit and friendly group. Bill's

favorite part about working at McHenry Country Club is the wonderful membership. They are good, family-oriented, hard working people and take good care of each other. Furthermore, Bill is fortunate to have a good group of employers. He explains, they sure can make it easier to go to work even during the long hot days of summer. Bill enjoys his profession and it shows in the product he produces. Bill feels the hardest part about managing this course (or any course) is not even course related. The most difficult thing Bill faces, as most superintendents, is the impact this profession has in our family lives and relationships. Especially during a more than regular tough season, the impact on family can be difficult to manage. Thankfully a shortened golf season and the opportunity to travel can help to make up for those summer short-comings.

One final thing that needs to be emphasized and was asked that it be included as it is the most important piece to this brief introduction; Bill would like to "thank all the people for the chances and opportunities to learn and grow in this business and be at McHenry Country Club – and a special thank you to Bob Lively."



The Gary Adams Memorial Bridge.

Adams is honored with this bridge and founder of the Taylor Made Golf the company that started the metal wood phenomena in golf.